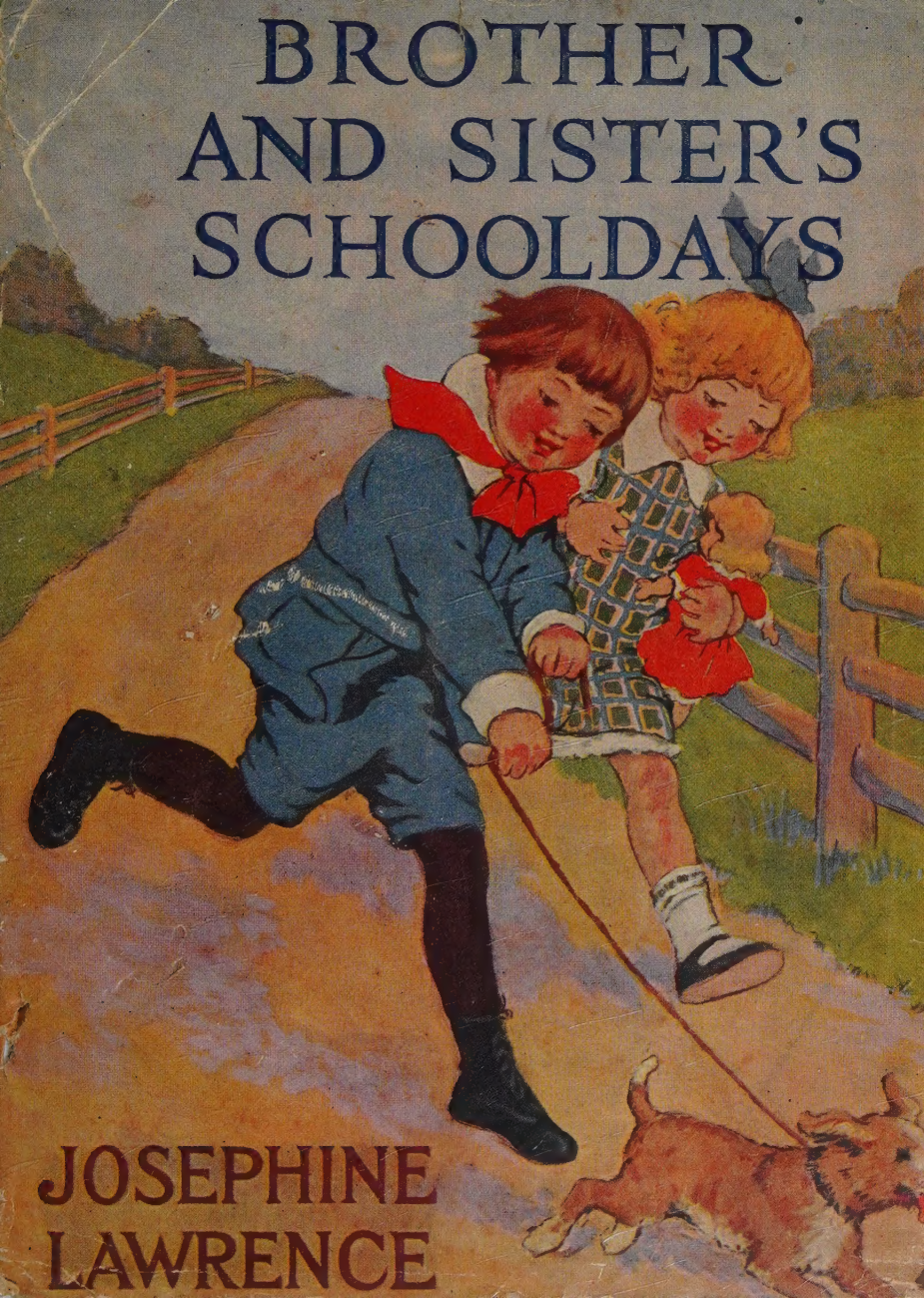
BROTHER AND SISTER'S SCHOOLDAYS



JOSEPHINE LAWRENCE

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BROTHER WOULDN'T LET GO OF THE HANDLE OF THE UMBRELLA.

BROTHER AND SISTER'S SCHOOLDAYS

BY

JOSEPHINE LAWRENCE

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"BROTHER AND SISTER'S HOLIDAYS"

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
JULIA GREENE

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BROTHER AND SISTER SERIES

By JOSEPHINE LAWRENCE

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Brother and Sister's Schooldays

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BROTHER AND SISTER'S SCHOOLDAYS

CHAPTER I

THE VERY FIRST DAY

"I'M IN Miss Gray's room, and guess who sits back of me?" said Brother, tumbling up the porch steps, so eager was he to tell Mother what had happened in the first day at school.

"Miss Ardsley is just as nice!" cried Sister, scrambling after him. "I led the march, Mother!"

Then Brother stood on one rocker of Mother Morrison's chair, and Sister stood on the other, and she kissed them both while the big bag of stockings she was darning slipped to the floor.

"I'll pick 'em up," promised Brother, darting after the thimble that rolled one way and the shiny darning ball that went in the opposite direction.

"Well, dearies, so you both like school?" asked Mother Morrison, when the bag was once more safely on her lap and she was sewing as

well as she could with a boy and girl on either side of her.

"It's lots of fun," declared Brother. "Guess who sits back of me, Mother?"

"Norman Crane?" guessed Mother Morrison.

Brother shook his head.

"Ellis Carr, perhaps?" said Mother Morrison.

Sister laughed with delight.

"I know," she chuckled. "It's Mickey Gaffney!"

"You always tell everything you know," scolded Brother. "I wanted Mother to guess, and now you've gone and spoiled it all."

"Never mind, Son, Sister didn't know you were waiting for me to guess," comforted Mother Morrison. "I don't think I should ever have thought of Mickey Gaffney, though. Was he wearing his nice new shoes?"

"Yes, he was," replied Brother, "and he looked just as clean, Mother. I guess his mother helped him wash his neck, 'cause when he went to the blackboard it was as clean as—as——"

"As anybody's," finished Sister for him. "Nina Gaffney's in my kindergarten class, Mother."

"You should say 'our kindergarten class,'

shouldn't she, Mother?" said Brother earnestly.

"I think it would be better," admitted Mother Morrison. "You know Daddy and I don't like to hear little girls and boys say 'my' too often."

"All right, I won't," declared dear little Sister, who was always anxious to please those she loved. "But, Mother, you prob'ly won't like it —I'm just as sorry—I lost our handkerchief; the one with the blue dots."

Brother began to laugh loudly.

"Isn't she funny!" he choked. "Oh, Mother, listen to her—who ever heard anyone say 'our handkerchief'? Ha, ha!"

Mother Morrison put down her mending and drew Sister into her lap.

"You mustn't laugh at her," she said to Brother. "You're a whole year older than she is, remember. Sister will understand by and by when to say 'our' and when to say 'my'; won't you, sweetheart?"

Molly came to the door just then to tell them that lunch was ready, and as Brother had to go back to school for the afternoon session, they followed her to the table at once.

Although it was the middle of September, and the Ridgeway schools had opened for the fall term, the weather was still warm enough to allow the windows to be open the greater part of

the day, and for Mother Morrison to sew on the wide front porch as long as she was careful to keep in the sunshine.

"I don't have to go to school any more," said Sister as Molly tied her bib about her neck. Sister, who was only five years old, still wore a bib except when there was company.

"Are you all through? Aren't you ever going again?" asked Molly in surprise.

"She means she doesn't have to go afternoons," explained Brother. "Kindergarten is only mornings, Molly. I have to go back, though. We have school till three o'clock."

"Then eat your soup quickly," said Mother Morrison. "You must allow plenty of time for the walk back, dear. What is it, Sister?"

"Could I go with him?" coaxed Sister. "Just as far as the iron gate, Mother?"

Sister, you see, was afraid she would miss Brother that afternoon. They had played together all day long through the summer and Sister was too old to take regular naps now. She was quite sure that there would be nothing pleasant to do if Brother wasn't there to do it with her.

"You don't want to take that long walk again, dearest," answered Mother Morrison. "Stay home and be my little girl till three o'clock.

Why, you haven't told me what you played in kindergarten this morning."

Brother finished his lunch and ran off, leaving a rather unhappy sister behind him. But presently, when Mother Morrison found her a needle and thread and some glass beads to string, and Grandmother Hastings, who lived across the street, came over with her embroidery, and they all three went out on the porch again to sew, Sister began to feel better.

"We are going to make things in school, Grandma," she said importantly. "Miss Ardsley said we can learn to weave and paste pictures and paint. And we play singing games, too."

"What did you play this morning?" asked Grandma Hastings.

"Menagerie," replied Sister. "We could be any kind of an animal we wanted to. Nina Gaffney was a wolf and Ida Smith was a dog."

"What were you, dear?" said Mother Morrison.

Sister seemed confused.

"I know what I was," she explained slowly, "but I can't say it; and Miss Ardsley said I could just be it, and the others could guess. But they couldn't. So nobody knows what kind of an animal I was."

Grandma Hastings looked surprised.

"Dear me," she said, making believe to be worried. "If the teacher didn't know, and the children couldn't guess, and you couldn't pronounce it, how can your grandmother guess what kind of an animal you were supposed to represent?"

Sister shook her dark curls sadly.

"I knew all the others, and nobody knew me," she confided sorrowfully. "I *wish* somebody could say my animal."

"You run over to the house and ask Aunt Kate for my other glasses," directed Grandma Hastings. "Then, when you come back, you pretend as you did in kindergarten and perhaps Mother or I can guess it for you."

CHAPTER II

HELPING JIMMIE

SISTER sped across the street for the glasses, and while she is gone is a good time to ask you whether you know her.

Sister wasn't her "real" name, of course. Nearly everyone called her that, but when Christmas packages came to her house for her they were addressed to "Miss Elizabeth Morrison," and that was the name you would have seen on the kindergarten roll. Those who didn't call her Sister called her Betty, and no one ever said "Elizabeth" unless once in a while Daddy Morrison did—when she had been naughty.

If you have read the first book about Brother and Sister, then you know a great deal about them. You know, for instance, that they had twin sisters, Louise and Grace, who were in high school; three brothers, Dick, a lawyer with Daddy Morrison in the city, dear Ralph who always helped them out of scrapes and loved them most to pieces whether they were very

good indeed or what Sister described as "ordinary good"; and Jimmie, who was captain of the high school football team and who had a gymnasium in the barn which Brother and Sister were not supposed to bother.

Reading the first book, which by the way is called "Brother and Sister," you will have learned that Brother, too, had another name. His Christmas presents always came to "Master Rhodes Morrison," and Rhodes was shortened to "Roddy" by his friends. Brother was six years old and Sister was five, and now that you are all nicely introduced, we'll go back to the front porch where Mother Morrison and Grandma Hastings were waiting for the glasses.

"Grandma," reported Sister, as she came back carrying the little black spectacle case carefully in one hand, "Aunt Kate says the dressmaker wants you pretty soon."

"That means she is ready for me to try on my new dress," declared Grandma cheerfully. "Well, Sister, let me see this animal you talk about, and then I'll run over and do as Miss Sawyer wants me to."

Grandma and Mother Morrison watched while Sister got down on her hands and knees. An animal, of course, must have four feet. Then Sister growled a little and stood up.

"Now I have to run," she explained. "I can't go fast enough on my knees, so I have to use my feet; but you pretend I have four feet."

From one end of the porch to the other, up and down, Sister ran. Then, panting, she stopped and looked hopefully at her audience.

"What am I?" she asked happily, sure that one of them could tell her.

Grandma Hastings shook her head.

"I can't guess," she said, puzzled. "Can't you try to pronounce it, dear?"

"No'm," replied Sister. "I just remember it from a picture in a book Norman Crane had. His mother read it out loud to us."

"Why, I can't imagine anything," sighed Mother Morrison. "It certainly is very funny, Sister. Couldn't any of the other children guess what you were trying to be? Couldn't Norman remember the picture in his book?"

"Norman isn't in the kindergarten," explained Sister. "He's in Roddy's class. Well, I'll just have to wait till Ralph comes; Ralph always knows everything."

Grandma Hastings went home to try on her new dress and Sister, at Mother's suggestion, got the large wooden rake to rake up some of the pretty leaves that were beginning to fall. And, before she had raked long, Brother came run-

ning home from school, eager to deliver a message.

"Mother!" he cried as soon as he saw her on the porch. "Jimmie wants the court-plaster and the bandages; he said I could bring 'em to the practice field."

"Is Jimmie hurt?" asked Mother Morrison quickly. "Has anything happened to him, Brother?"

"No, Mother, honestly he's all right," Brother assured her, remembering too late that mothers and grandmothers are always worried about football players. "I met him going to practice, and he said he'd forgotten the bandage stuff and would I bring it to him? And, Mother, can't I stay and watch 'em just a little while?"

"Oh, Mother, let me go?" begged Sister. "I can carry things, and I love to watch football. Please, Mother?"

"For an hour, then," said Mother Morrison, rising to get the gauze and the court-plaster Jimmie had sent for. "You must be home by half-past four, children. And be sure you don't get in the way and hinder the players."

The football field was back of the gray stone high school, and the high school was some distance from the building where Brother and Sister went to school. The kindergarten, primary

and grammar schools were all in the one building, in Ridgeway, but the high school had a building and grounds all to itself.

"When I grow up, I'm going to be captain of the football team, just like Jimmie," said Brother, as they walked along.

"So am I," declared Sister.

"You can't—you're a girl," retorted Brother.

Sister had been told she couldn't do so many things she very much wanted to do, because she was a girl and girls couldn't do those kind of things, that now she was ready to be cross whenever she heard this answer.

"I guess girls can be football captains," she insisted. "Louise plays on the basketball team and the captain is a girl; she said so."

"Basketball is different," explained Brother. "I guess you never heard of a girls' football team. Nobody ever did."

"They will when I grow up and am the captain," Sister replied, and as there did not seem to be any answer to this, Brother wisely let the question drop.

Jimmie, looking very tall and business-like, saw them across the field, when they turned the corner of the lane that led down to the practice lot, and waved to them to come over to him.

"Did you bring the court-plaster?" he asked,

and Brother proudly handed him the two small packages while Sister pulled the gauze bandages from her sweater pocket.

"All right—thanks," said Jimmie briefly.

"Mother said we could stay and watch a little while," ventured Brother, much to Sister's relief. She was afraid he might not tell Jimmie.

"Well, then you'll have to promise to stay on the sidelines and not make any trouble," said Jimmie, who was used to giving orders. "You won't understand the plays and no one will have any time to explain things to you."

"We don't care, we'll like it," cried Brother eagerly. "Where'bouts are the side-lines, Jimmie?"

Some one in back of them laughed.

"Let them stay with me, Jim," a new voice said. "I'll look after them."

CHAPTER III

A BIT OF FOOTBALL

A TALL, thin lad, walking with one crutch, came up to them, smiling.

"Hello, Van," Jimmie smiled back at the lame boy. "This is my kid brother and sister. It's ever so good of you, but I don't like to give you the trouble——"

"No trouble at all," said the lame boy. "Come on over here where my campchair is, youngsters, and we'll watch the game in comfort."

Brother and Sister followed him to where a campchair was placed in a pile of rugs and sweaters, and Jimmie ran off to his team.

The lame boy sat down on the canvas seat and Brother and Sister sat on two sweaters he spread out for them.

"Who do you s'pose will win?" asked Sister politely.

"Nobody can win—this is just practice, isn't it?" questioned Brother. He really did know quite a bit about football and he had seen the

Ridgeway High School play several games the fall before.

"Just practice," assented their new friend. "You must be mighty proud of your brother—he's our best player."

"We are—Jimmie's great," Brother assured him. "When I grow up I'm going to be a football captain, too."

"So'm I," murmured Sister.

"Can girls be captains?" asked Brother. "They don't play football, do they?"

"Well, not as a regular thing," Van admitted. "Still, you know, that doesn't mean they won't. And I'm sure," he added politely, "if they ever do play football, they will play a fine game."

The boys were out on the field by this time. After twenty minutes or so of dashing about, Jimmie and a short, stout man who, Van explained, was the "coach," that is a man who knows all about football and teaches the school team, went off to one side and had a little talk.

"Brown!" shouted Jimmie, and a merry-faced boy who had been sitting next to Brother threw off his sweater and ran out on the field.

Another boy came slowly toward them, and dropped into the place where Brown had sat.

"Tough luck," said Van in a low voice.

Brother looked at the boy who had sat down

next to him. Usually Brother found it hard to talk to someone he did not know well, but this boy, who was breathing hard from running, reminded Brother of Jimmie.

"Did you get tired?" said Brother sympathetically.

"Tired?" repeated the boy. "Gee, I'm never tired! No, they want to try Brown in my place."

Brother did not understand.

"You see, they didn't like my work this afternoon much, and Jimmie thinks perhaps Brown will do better," explained the boy. "If he does, he'll play in the game with Warden High School Saturday."

"Instead of you?" asked Sister, who had listened.

"Instead of me," agreed the boy.

"I think Jimmie is too mean for anything!" declared Sister. "Why didn't you tell him you wouldn't let that other boy have your place?"

The football player mopped his face with a grimy handkerchief and smiled a little.

"No use having a captain if you don't obey his orders," he told them. "And the whole object of having a Ridgeway football team, you know, is to beat the other schools; if Brown can make the team stronger, I'd only be hurting the school by trying to hold him back."

Brother and Sister thought a great deal about this during the rest of the hour, and they were still thinking when Jimmie came up and said that he would walk home with them.

"It's so warm we're not going to practice long today," he explained. "You wait a few minutes till I rub down and dress and we can go home together."

When Jimmie was ready, and they had said goodbye to the lame boy and to the player, whose name, he told them, was Kenneth Blake, Sister had reached the point in her thinking where she was ready to ask questions.

"Kenneth wasn't mad at you, was he?" she said to Jimmie, holding his hand and taking three skips to every one of his steps, her favorite way of walking with him.

"Mad? What would he be mad about?" asked Jimmie in surprise.

" 'Cause you wouldn't let him play any more," Sister reminded him. "That Brown boy took his place."

"Well, that wasn't anything," said Jimmie sensibly. "Getting mad when you're playing anything, from checkers to football, Sister, is very silly. The most important thing is to work for the good of the school."

"That's what he said," cried Brother eagerly.

"Does Van work for the good of the school, Jimmie? And what's the rest of his name?"

"You mean Niel Van Doren," said Jimmie with a smile. "We call him 'Van' for short. Why, he was one of our best men last year, and this summer he broke his ankle and can't hope to play at all. He likes to come and watch the practice, though."

"He won't be lame for always, will he?" begged Sister. "He's so nice, Jimmie, and he never said he used to play football. He thinks maybe girls will have a team some day."

"Not if I have anything to say about it, they won't!" declared Jimmy shortly. "No, Van won't be lame—soon as his ankle knits he'll be as good as ever; but he won't be well in time to play with us and he graduates in June."

When they came in sight of the house, Sister's quick eyes made a pleasant discovery.

"Ralph's home!" she shouted. "That's his brief-case in the hammock. Goody, now he can tell me what kind of an animal I am."

"It's something they did in kindergarten this morning," explained Brother to Jimmie, who looked as though he thought his little sister had suddenly gone crazy.

CHAPTER IV

HOMESICK SISTER

RALPH, too, looked puzzled, when Sister hugged him with all her might and asked him to please watch and tell her what kind of an animal she was.

The two older boys laughed, but Brother didn't.

"She can't spell it, or say it," he said seriously. "And I can't guess it when she does it; but she *says* it is an animal."

So, while Ralph and Jimmie watched her, Sister "pretended" again for them. She got down on her hands and knees. Then she growled a little. Next she stood up and ran from one end of the porch to the other.

"Let's see, the running seems to be a clue," mused Ralph. "Only animal I can think of that runs fast is an antelope—you an antelope, Sister?"

Sister shook her head.

"No, 'tisn't an antelope," she said.

"A seal might growl like that," put in Jimmie, interested in spite of himself, "but a seal doesn't run."

Some one coming up the walk at that moment made Sister forget all about animals. It was Daddy Morrison, and Sister and Brother both jumped the three porch steps in one jump and landed in the arms of the smiling gray-haired gentleman who carried several bundles but still managed to catch them.

"Why, Sister!" said Daddy Morrison, kissing her. "You're getting to be a regular little kangaroo."

"That's it, Ralph!" cried Sister joyfully. "I was a kangaroo. I knew it was something that began with a 'C.'"

Daddy Morrison and Ralph and Jimmie laughed at this till Mother Morrison came out to see what they were making so much noise about. When she heard that Sister thought kangaroo was spelled with a "C" she laughed a little, too. But, as Sister afterward explained, she didn't have spelling in kindergarten.

"Do kangaroos growl?" asked Brother, when the others had gone into the house to get ready for supper.

"I don't know," admitted Sister. "I guess

they do—they're wild anyway, and all wild animals growl."

"But they don't run, they hop," Brother insisted. "Norman Crane had a mechanical toy that was a kangaroo and you wound it up and it hopped."

"Don't be so fussy," said Sister calmly. "I thought a kangaroo ran, so I did. Next time I can hop."

Brother and Sister were up early the next morning. They did not mean to be late for school once during the term and Mickey Gaffney and his sister, Nina, said they were not going to be late, either. You will remember Mickey Gaffney, the little red-haired boy who worked for Miss Putnam, if you have read the first book of this series.

They were halfway down the block when Mother Morrison called to Brother.

"Gee, I forgot to take the medicine," said Brother quickly. "You hold my pencil-box, and I'll be right back."

Brother had had a little cold for the last week and Doctor Fred had been to see him a few days before school opened and had left him some small white pills to take at certain times. One of these times was after breakfast.

Doctor Fred was young and jolly and every-

one liked him and took the medicine he gave them without a murmur. Brother and Sister thought he was wonderful, and when he told them to hurry and get well they always did just as fast as they possibly could.

Sister stood holding the pencil-box till Brother came running back to her, and then they hurried on to school so that they would not be late.

"Is it nasty medicine?" asked Sister curiously.

"No—pills don't taste," returned Brother. "Water doesn't, either. Maybe if I didn't drink water I would taste it, but if I didn't drink water I couldn't swallow the pill. Now hurry up this noon; I'll wait at the gate, but don't stay and play with any of those girls if you want to go home with me."

"Oh, I don't," protested Sister. "I didn't yesterday, Roddy, honestly I didn't. But Miss Ardsley wants everyone to say good-bye to her, and when there's a crowd around you have to wait and wait. I'll hurry fast as I can, but please wait, Roddy."

Brother promised to wait, and Sister went in the little side door kept for the kindergarten pupils, while Brother went on up the main steps.

The songs and games were just as delightful

as they had been the first day, and pretty Miss 'Ardsley was as kind and charming as ever. Sister knew the boys and girls by name this second morning and she ought to have felt at home. No one can really explain what causes our feelings, can they? For Sister, who had laughed and played all through the first morning and had not been lonely for one moment, suddenly, this second day in school, was dreadfully homesick.

She didn't know she was homesick. She only knew that she wanted Brother more than anyone else in the world. She didn't know how to get to him, and, worst of all, she couldn't cry!

She just put her curly dark head down on the table and was very still.

"Don't you feel well, darling?" asked Miss 'Ardsley, coming up to her. "Don't you want to match these lovely colored papers? No? Well, then, tell Miss Ardsley what's the matter."

She sat down and took Sister on her lap.

"Do you want to go home?" she asked gently.

Sister was sure she didn't. She didn't want to go home without Brother. She couldn't say this, indeed she couldn't talk at all. She could only look very sad and unhappy and wonder what ailed her.

At recess, Miss Ardsley, who was really worried about the little girl, sent a note to Brother's teacher asking her to let him come down to the kindergarten room. And when he came in, smiling and cheerful and happy, Sister burst out crying.

She cried and cried, and the more she cried the better she felt, so that, when there were no more tears, she was almost like the little Sister they remembered.

"Why didn't you cry before, dear?" asked Miss Ardsley. "I believe holding back the tears made you feel much worse."

"She couldn't cry before," said Brother quickly.

"No, I couldn't," agreed Sister solemnly.

"You couldn't—why?" said the teacher, smiling at the tear-streaked face Sister lifted to her.

"'Cause Roddy had my clean handkerchief in his pocket," explained Sister.

So you see, she really couldn't. We all need spandy clean handkerchiefs when we're going to cry, and if you don't know exactly when you may want to cry, the safest plan is to carry your hanky in your own pocket and not trust it to even the dearest of brothers.

CHAPTER V

KEPT IN

HAVING seen Brother, Sister's homesickness went away as suddenly as it had come, and after recess she spent a busy and happy hour choosing pretty colored wools that later she would use for embroidering cards. Sister was very anxious to learn to sew.

Brother waited for her at noon and Brownie, the puppy, was very glad to see them come home. Brother, of course, had to go back to school in the afternoon, but Sister stayed and Brownie liked that plan very much. Louise and Grace and Jimmie, who all went to high school, never came home to lunch, and Mother Morrison and Sister were the only ones at home.

Today Mother had gone into the city with Grandma Hastings to shop, and Molly gave them their lunch. She was busy with her ironing and when Brother returned to school, Sister and Brownie went out into the yard to rake

up the leaves and wish for three o'clock to come.

"You tell me when it's three, Molly," called Sister from the lawn. "Roddy gets out at three, and he'll be home quarter past. You tell me, won't you?"

Molly said she would, and Sister began to rake the leaves. She had a fine large pile of them raked under the big horsechestnut tree when she remembered that old Mr. Givens, further down the street, always burned his dead leaves. Perhaps she ought to burn these and surprise Mother Morrison.

"Molly," she said hurriedly, opening the kitchen door and peeking in, "do you care if I burn these leaves?"

Well, clearly Molly did. She threw up her hands and let the hot iron drop to her clean white floor.

"Burn the leaves!" she cried. "Whoever heard tell the likes of that! Don't you know your father's orders about touching matches? Many a little girl has lost her life playing with burning leaves—the fire catches your skirts. Don't let me hear you mentioning such a thing!"

"Well, Mr. Givens burns his leaves," said Sister. "He likes to."

"And a fine smudge he makes of it," retorted

Molly. "Anyway, Mr. Givens is sixty-eight come next month and if you was to ask him, he'd tell you that when he was five years old his father smacked him if he as much as touched a match."

"I suppose that does make a difference," admitted Sister. "Will he have sixty-eight candles on his cake, Molly?"

"He won't have a cake," said Molly gloomily. "Nobody takes any trouble for an old man like that. His daughter is good to him, but she never makes a fuss over him."

"I think he ought to have a birthday cake," said Sister to Brownie when she went back to raking the leaves.

Then she tried to bury Brownie in the deep pile and forgot about Mr. Givens and his birthday.

"Three o'clock!" called Molly presently, and Sister ran down to the gate to watch for Brother.

She knew that even if he hurried, it would be ten or fifteen minutes before he would turn the corner and ten minutes, when you are waiting, seems very long. Sister was sure that she had been sitting on the gate post for half an hour when a little figure came running around the corner and toward her.

"Hello, Mickey!" called Sister, for it was Mickey Gaffney. "Where you going? Want to play tag?"

"I have to go out to the Stevens farm for Miss Putnam," answered Mickey. "She wants fresh eggs. Don't you think you could go? Ask your mother."

"Oh, Mother isn't home," said Sister. "'Sides I have to wait for Roddy. I always do."

"Roddy had to stay in," Mickey told her. "I forgot he said to tell you. I guess he'll have to stay till 'most four o'clock, 'cause Miss Gray was ever so cross."

"But you're not staying in," protested Sister. To her it seemed that if the teacher kept Brother after school by rights she should make all the other boys stay, too.

"I didn't whisper," explained Mickey. "I knew if I got kept in Miss Putnam would be mad. When you have a job you have to keep thinking about it all the time."

Mickey looked down respectfully at his neat shoes. Last year he had stayed away from school because he had no shoes to wear and his father had been arrested for not sending him, and oh, dear, there had been the biggest fuss. Now, thanks to the work Mickey did for the Morrisons and for Miss Putnam, he was wear-

ing good new shoes paid for with his own money, and Nina, his younger sister, also had proper school clothes. No wonder Mickey thought of his "job" very often and was careful not to do anything that might cause him to lose it.

He ran off on his way to the Stevens farm, and Sister sat quietly on the gate post, thinking.

"Mickey said maybe he'd have to stay till 'most four o'clock," she thought. "And half-past three Mother said he must take a pill. Maybe he'll be ever so worse if he doesn't. He might be just as sick and then Doctor Fred would scold and scold."

Sister slid down from the gatepost and went slowly into the house.

Molly was still ironing and Sister did not go into the kitchen, but upstairs to the bathroom, where a low glass shelf, low enough for her and Brother to reach, held their toothbrushes and glasses and tooth-powder and soap. There was the little box of pills marked "For Roddy" in Doctor Fred's clear handwriting.

Sister opened the box, took out a pill and wrapped it carefully in a clean handkerchief she took from the pile of school handkerchiefs on the shelf in the linen closet.

Then she ran downstairs into the kitchen.

"Please, Molly," she asked, "what time is it?"

"Twenty minutes past three," said Molly good-naturedly. "Why, Sister, hasn't Brother come home yet?"

"Not yet," replied Sister, opening the kitchen door that led into the yard.

Molly supposed she was going back to raking leaves, and Brownie supposed so, too. He barked and danced about her and made little, short runs toward the rake.

"I'm through raking," Sister informed the little dog. "I'm going to school. Want to come, Brownie? We'll have to run."

Brownie dearly liked to go for a walk, and if the walk were a run, so much the better. He dashed through the gate ahead of Sister and tore off down the street pell-mell. Sister, the clean handkerchief clutched tightly in one hand, raced after him.

"Where you going?" called Nellie Yarrow, who was just going into her own house.

"Can't stop—I'll be late!" cried Sister, trying to run faster.

She was quite out of breath when she finally reached the school yard.

CHAPTER VI

A HAPPY PLAN

"SCHOOL'S out!" shouted one of the older boys to tease her.

"I know it," said Sister, walking straight past him and up the main steps into the long corridor.

She had never been in this part of the building and she was a little frightened, it looked so large and gloomy and empty. As she and Brownie stood in the hall, a great bell clanged. Sister had heard this bell in kindergarten. It rang every quarter of an hour.

"Oh, please," she begged a little boy hurrying past her, "please, what is that a quarter of?"

"It means half-past three," said the little boy politely. "Do you want to see anybody?"

"Do you know where Miss Gray's room is?" asked Sister quickly. "I want to see my brother."

"Her room's the last one at the end of this hall," answered the little boy, pointing in the right direction.

Sister said thank you and hurried down the hall, Brownie following her. She had forgotten to be afraid because it was half-past three and Brother had not taken his pill!

There was no need to knock on Miss Gray's door, for it stood open. The teacher sat at her desk on the platform and seven boys and two little girls sat quietly at their desks, their hands folded on the tops of their desks. They were being good. When Miss Gray kept her pupils after school she never allowed them to study—she said she wanted them to remember why they were kept in.

The nine children were very tired of sitting so quietly, and when they looked up and saw Sister and Brownie, they were much interested.

"Well, little girl," said Miss Gray pleasantly, "did you wish to see me?"

She smiled at Sister, and motioned her to come up beside her desk.

Sister and Brownie went up on the platform.

"It's half-past three," said Sister jerkily.

That wasn't what she meant to say, but she had thought so much about the time that her tongue spoke of it first.

"Half-past three, child?" echoed Miss Gray, surprised.

"Yes, and Roddy has to take this at half-past

three—Mother said so," Sister went on, tumbling the clean handkerchief with the little white pill wrapped in it on Miss Gray's desk. "Doctor Fred said he mustn't forget, and Mother said half-past three was the next time. And nobody's home 'cept me, and I thought—I thought——"

"You thought you'd bring it to him, because he didn't come home at the right time," finished Miss Gray. "Well, you're a dear little sister, and I'm going to dismiss Rhodes so that he can take his medicine. You must have run all the way, your face is so flushed."

Miss Gray told all the pupils that they might go, warning them first not to whisper again, and then she put her arm around Sister and asked her several questions as though she liked to talk to her. She asked her her name, and whether she went to school; and when she heard she was in the kindergarten, she said she hoped to have her in her class next year.

Brother took one of the paper cups at the fountain in the hall and swallowed his pill with a drink of water.

"Now you won't be sick," said Sister contentedly.

Then Miss Gray said good-bye to them both, and to Brownie, who had behaved beautifully,

she said, and the two children went home.

On the way, Sister remembered about Mr. Givens and she told Brother what she thought about his birthday cake.

"Do you suppose Molly would make him one?" asked Sister. "She makes lovely birthday cakes."

"Supposing she did," said Brother. "Where would we get sixty-eight candles?"

Sister didn't know. She had a tin bank and so had Brother, but they both knew very well that the pennies they poked through the holes must be saved for Mother Morrison's Christmas present.

"Let's ask Ralph," suggested Brother, and they decided to ask him that night.

Ralph, however, announced at supper that he was going into the city that evening, to do some work at the library.

"Oh, Ralph, we had something ever so important to talk about," cried Sister as he started upstairs.

"Come on and tell me while I get my books together," said Ralph, who was seldom too hurried to talk to his little sister.

Brother and Sister sat down on his bed, and while he hunted up the books he wanted and strapped them in a bundle to carry, they told

him about old Mr. Givens, who would not have any birthday cake unless someone saw to it that something was done about it.

"I guess Molly will make him a cake," chattered Sister, "but how can we buy candles, Ralph? It would be our birthday present if we did some of it ourselves."

"Don't be too sure about Molly baking the cake—she's pretty busy, you know," warned Ralph. "Better ask her in plenty of time. Now about the candles, let me see—when is this birthday?"

"It's come-next-month," repeated Sister seriously. "Molly said so."

"We must find out the exact day," declared Ralph. "If it is toward the middle or end of the month, I'll tell you what you can do; I'll take you after hickory nuts some Saturday, and Grandma will buy all you bring her. How will that do?"

"Oh, goody!" cried Sister, jumping up and down on the bed. "Let's find enough nuts to buy sixty-eight candles!"

"We will," promised Ralph. "Now run downstairs, chicks. I want to put out the light. You find out when Mr. Givens has his birthday, and if the weather is all right I'll take you nutting."

Ralph kissed them good-night, for they would be in bed long before he came back, and Brother and Sister went downstairs to find Mother Morrison and ask her whether she thought Molly would be willing to bake an extra cake.

"Well, I'll tell you," said Mother, when she heard their plans. "Molly works very hard now in this big house, keeping such a large family comfortable. I don't like to ask her to bake a cake when it will only mean more for her to do. But if you are willing to give Mr. Givens our cake, that is the nice chocolate layer cake we would have the week of his birthday, why Molly will bake that and we will go without. I'm sure the rest of the family will be willing if you are; you have the sweetest tooth of all."

Brother and Sister were very fond of the big chocolate cake Molly baked every Saturday morning, and for a moment they almost decided that perhaps Mr. Givens didn't need a birthday cake after all. If he didn't expect one he wouldn't be disappointed. Then Brother remembered his own birthday and the big cake he had cut at the party.

CHAPTER VII

DANCING SCHOOL

"ALL right, let's do it," Brother said firmly.

"Let's," agreed Sister. "Perhaps," she added hopefully, "Molly will leave some icing in the bowl."

Brother was out in the kitchen the next morning before breakfast to ask Molly when old Mr. Givens had his birthday and to explain to her about the cake.

"Sure, and I'll make him an elegant cake," promised Molly generously. "His birthday is October twenty-second."

That was a month away and to the children seemed very long to wait. But Molly said time always went faster than they knew, and that the nuts would be ready then.

"Anyway, you can go the week before," she pointed out. "The twenty-second is on a Friday, and you'll want to go nutting the Saturday before that. Then you'll have plenty of time to

sell your grandma the nuts and to buy the candles. 'Tis a broad cake I must be making, to hold sixty-eight candles."

Every time Brother and Sister saw Mr. Givens after that, and the old gentleman was usually out working in his yard or tinkering about the fence when they went to school, they were afraid they might tell him the secret. Not that they meant to—dear, no; but you know how secrets will teeter on the tip of your tongue and sometimes, when you least expect it, slide right off. Brother and Sister never stopped to talk very long for fear they might tell about the cake.

It did seem as though October would never come. Jimmie, who played football after school every day, said the longer time his team had to practice, the better chance they had for winning games. Louise and Grace didn't want the weather to get cold, and even Ralph wasn't anxious for September to go, because he had a hard examination to pass in October.

But before the Saturday set for the nutting trip came, something happened that upset Brother very much indeed.

Louise and Grace, the twins, were, of course, almost young ladies. They did a great many grown up things and the kind of parties they

went to were very different from those Brother and Sister knew. At the parties Grace and Louise went to, the guests danced. Brother couldn't understand why anyone should want to dance.

"You and Mother are coming to dancing school tomorrow," Louise told him one day.

Louise and Grace went to dancing school Wednesday afternoons after school.

"I think I'm busy," said Brother politely, but Louise only laughed and told him that Mother was going to bring him and Sister.

"Mother, do we have to go see Louise dance?" asked Brother the next morning as he was getting ready for school.

"Why, Son, don't you want to go?" asked Mother Morrison. "You'll like it, dear. The music is lovely."

They were to go at four o'clock and Brother was told to hurry home from school to get ready to take Mother Morrison and Sister. That made him feel a little better, because he liked to take his mother to places.

The dancing school was held in one of the houses uptown and the teacher's name was Miss Florrie. Everyone called her Miss Florrie and if she had another name they never used it. She was a little woman with curly hair and

dancing eyes, and when she smiled at Brother he had to smile right back, though he was still a little cross. You see, he had made up his mind that he didn't like dancing school. That was silly, because how could he tell when he didn't know what it was like?

"Isn't it pretty!" cried Sister, beaming at the lights and the pretty dresses and the music which was playing softly.

All the pupils were about the age of Grace and Louise, and when they began to dance, Sister's feet kept time with them.

"I hope you're both coming to my children's class which opens in a few weeks," said Miss Florrie, sitting down in a chair near Mother Morrison and smiling at Brother and Sister.

"Oh, Mother, are we?" said Sister delightedly.

"Oh, Mother, don't let's," begged Brother.

Miss Florrie laughed at his frown.

"You'll find ever so many little boys," she assured him. "You'll like it when you find how easy it is, dear."

She went off to teach her class a new step, but she had spoiled Brother's afternoon for him. All the rest of the hour he wondered whether he would have to go to dancing school and why people wanted to dance anyway, and why a fel-

low always had to do something he didn't like.

"Mother, we aren't going, are we?" he asked as they walked home together.

Louise and Grace had waited for some friends.

"I've entered you both in the Saturday afternoon class," replied Mother Morrison. "Sister wants to go, Brother; can't you try to like it to please her?"

"But, Mother," argued Brother. "We have to go nutting with Ralph. Honestly we can't go to dancing school. That's a—a—prev'ous engagement."

"Yes, it is," agreed Mother pleasantly, "but, my dear little son, the Saturday dancing class doesn't open till after your nutting party. Miss Florrie gives the first lesson the day after Mr. Givens' birthday. So you see you won't have to miss anything."

Brother worried about dancing school all the way home. He resolved to ask Daddy Morrison to coax Mother to let him stay home. If girls liked that sort of thing, all right, but Brother didn't believe boys ever did.

That night he found Daddy Morrison reading his paper all alone in his den upstairs.

"Daddy, do I have to go to dancing school?" asked Brother at once. He never wasted time when he had a question to be answered.

"Why, I believe Mother tells me you and Sister are going," said Daddy Morrison, putting down his paper. "Come sit in my lap and tell me about it; don't you want to go?"

"I think it's so silly," complained Brother, climbing into his father's lap. "You just go one-two, one-two, whenever she tells you. Let Sister go—she likes it."

"Well, you'll have to go too," declared Daddy Morrison quickly. "Some day you'll be glad you learned to dance."

"Not when I'm grown up," said Brother. "I'm going to be a soldier. They don't dance."

"Why, Brother!" Daddy Morrison's voice was so surprised. "Don't you know that they teach the cadets to dance at West Point? Yes, sir, every one of them has to learn, whether he likes it or not. They're not asked, either—dancing is one of the things they simply have to learn."

"Oh!" murmured Brother. "Well, then maybe if I learn now, I can be a soldier quicker."

"I shouldn't wonder," said his daddy, smiling.

CHAPTER VIII

AFTER NUTS

THE Saturday Ralph had promised to take them nutting came at last. Days will come round to us, you know, if we only wait long enough.

"Wake up, Betty, we're going after nuts!" shouted Brother, running to the window as soon as he woke up that morning to see about the weather.

"Is the sun there?" asked Sister, sitting up in bed and trying not to look sleepy.

Ralph, in his own room across the hall, heard them.

"Go back to bed. It's only six o'clock," he called. "We're not going till after lunch, you know."

But Brother and Sister couldn't go to sleep again, so what was the use of going to bed? They had several things to do before they were ready to go with Ralph.

At breakfast Ralph, who was going in to law school for a half-day session, announced that he

would have his lunch in town and that Brother and Sister should meet him at the crossing opposite the railroad station. The Ridgeway trolley line which ran far out into the country started there.

"Mind you are there at quarter past one," said Ralph, stopping to kiss Mother Morrison good-bye. "There's a trolley at twenty minutes past and we don't want to have to wait fifteen minutes for another one."

Brother and Sister promised to be on time, and then, when they had finished their breakfast, went out into the kitchen to ask Molly for the bag she had offered to give them to carry their nuts in.

"Here you are," said Molly as soon as she saw them. "Here's a dandy flour-sack all washed white as snow. See that you fill it full."

Molly knew all about the plan for Mr. Givens' birthday cake, and she thought it was a fine one. She said she would make him the "best cake he ever put into his mouth," and she told the children they might help her bake the cake after school the next Friday afternoon.

"But that won't be large enough," objected Brother when he saw the flour bag. "Where's that sack the man brought potatoes in last week, Molly?"

"The potato sack?" repeated Molly, laughing. "Sure, child, that holds a bushel. You'll never find a bushel o' nuts in one afternoon; if you did, you'd never be able to carry 'em home. This bag will be plenty big enough, you'll see."

Brother was quite sure it wouldn't hold half the nuts, but he did not want to dispute with Molly. She had been kind to hunt the sack up for him, and if they found too many nuts to put in it, why perhaps they could leave them in a pile under a tree and come home for another bag.

After the sack was folded and tucked away in Brother's sweater pocket so that there would be no danger of leaving it behind, the two children went over to see Grandma Hastings.

She, too, knew about Mr. Givens' birthday cake, and she and Aunt Kate said they were very anxious to have some fine, fat hickory nuts.

"Don't let the squirrels get them all," said Grandma Hastings wisely. "Of course you won't take every nut away from them because they must store up food for the winter; but there are plenty of nuts, the paper says, this fall for squirrels and people too."

"Molly only gave us a flour-sack," explained Brother. "Of course that won't hold many, Grandma. But Betty said maybe you would

pay us for all the nuts so we can buy the candles and then we could bring you the rest another time. We'll have to leave 'em under a tree or something, I guess."

"Why, that flour-sack holds a half-bushel of nuts, if you ever filled it. If you get it half-full, I'll be surprised," Aunt Kate informed them.

"But that will be as many nuts as we'll use," said dear Grandma hastily. "Don't worry, pets; you'll have money enough for the candles."

Mother Morrison said they might have lunch early, and as Louise and Grace were going to entertain their sewing club of ten girls, Brother and Sister had their luncheon picnic-fashion at one end of Molly's kitchen table. They had some of the "sewing sandwiches," as Sister called the sandwiches made for the visitors, and some of the pretty little fancy cakes, too. And, as soon as they had finished, it was time to walk to the trolley to meet Ralph.

"There he is!" cried Sister when they came in sight of the station.

Sure enough, Ralph was just stepping off the train and he saw them and waved to them.

"Look behind you!" he called as he came toward them.

Sister turned, and there was Brownie!

The little dog leaped and barked about them, apparently sure that they were as glad to see him as he was to find them. If he could have talked, he would have said that he had been running very hard to catch up with them.

"You're a bad dog!" scolded Brother. "Will you wait, Ralph, while I take him home? I can run all the way and I'll be back right away."

"No need to do that," said Ralph. "I'll ask the station agent to shut him up and keep him till we come back. I wish we could take him with us, but they don't allow dogs on the trolley."

Poor little Brownie was sadly disappointed when, instead of going for a nice, long walk with his beloved folks, he was hustled into the station and given to a man in a blue cap who took him downstairs and shut him up in a lonely storeroom. But then, as Ralph explained, he should have asked whether they wanted him to go with them for a walk.

"Must dogs ask if they can do things?" inquired Sister as the trolley came buzzing around the corner and stopped at the loop.

"Good dogs always do, if they remember their training," answered Ralph, lifting her into the car. "Brownie is only a puppy; when he

grows up he will know better than to follow us without being invited."

Brother and Sister liked to ride in trolley cars. The Ridgeway trolley was what is known as a "speed line" and could go very fast. The town was not very large, and as soon as they came to the end of the main street, goodness! didn't that motorman put on his power! The car swayed and rattled, and Sister bounced about in the seat like a rubber ball until Ralph put his arm about her and held her steady.

"Where are the woods?" Sister wanted to know.

"We're almost there," said Ralph. "Push the little black button there by your elbow, Brother, and we'll get off at the next stop. We have to walk a little ways, but it isn't far."

"Look, look!" cried Sister, the moment Ralph lifted her down from the car platform.

CHAPTER IX

IN THE WOODS

"OH, RALPH, isn't he cunning!" said Brother.

There, at one side of the road, sat a little rabbit staring gravely at them. When the car started, he turned like a flash and scuttled under a fence and out of sight.

"I wish we could catch him and take him home to play with," sighed Sister.

"He wouldn't like it, would he, Ralph?" Brother said earnestly. "His father and mother would miss him, too, and maybe he would die."

"I'm sure he's better off here, Sister," explained Ralph gently. "He can run about the fields and be far happier than he would be in our yard even if you were very kind to him. See those trees over there? That's the woods."

They walked down a lane to reach the woods and in a field on one side a man was bending over a pile of cornstalks.

THEY SAT IN THE BRANCHES AND LOOKED DOWN AT BROTHER AND SISTER.

He looked up as they went by and said "Hello," and Ralph spoke to him.

"Mr. Greene said we might come after nuts," Ralph said, stepping up to the fence and looking over.

Brother and Sister peeked through the rails very much interested.

"Well, I guess there's enough for everybody this year," declared the man pleasantly. "Good corn crop, too. What do you think of that for an ear of corn, youngster?"

He held up a great long yellow ear to show Brother, who felt that he was expected to say something.

"It's very tall, isn't it?" he ventured politely.

The man laughed, and Ralph and Brother and Sister walked on.

"Here's a hickory tree, Sister," said Ralph suddenly.

"Oh, no, this isn't the woods," replied Sister, determined not to be fooled.

She thought hickory trees had to grow in the woods with all the other trees.

"Yes, it is!" cried Brother. "Here's a nut—look!"

He held up a beautiful white hickory nut and Ralph stooped and picked up another from the ground.

"But you said we were going to the woods," persisted Sister.

"We are, dear, but why not get these nuts first?" asked Ralph. "See, these six trees here close together are all hickories. Some kind farmer planted them years ago. We may not find any in the woods."

So Sister helped them look for nuts, too, and they brushed away the leaves on the ground and found ever so many. It was such fun to hunt for them and to pop them into the bag that Sister decided then and there what she wanted to be when she grew up. She and Brother thought a great deal what they were going to be when they grew up and they changed their plans very often. That is the lovely thing about plans—you can change them.

"When I grow up," announced Sister, pushing back her scarlet tam-o'-shanter and looking very serious, "when I grow up, I'm going to be a farmer and plant hickory-nut trees."

"That will be fine!" said Ralph heartily. "Then when you are an old lady, little girls and boys will come and hunt for nuts under your trees as you and Brother are doing now."

When they had a good many nuts in the bag, Ralph said they had better walk on toward the woods.

"We don't want to take the very last nut," he said, "and even if we don't find any in the woods we can go back to the trolley another way and will probably find other trees."

There were squirrels in the woods and they didn't like little girls and boys to come after nuts. No, indeed, they chattered and scolded about it right loudly. They sat up high in the branches and looked down at Brother and Sister, who could see them very plainly because there were no leaves.

And, after all, they found only one nut tree. There were oaks, with acorns, but Grandma couldn't eat those. And there were "pig nuts," which look like hickories but are not good to eat at all.

"Never mind, we'll walk through and come out on the other side," said Ralph cheerfully. "I know there are some trees in the pasture lot over the line fence. Come on, Sister, let's see who is the first to find something interesting."

It wasn't a very cold day and there was no wind. The sun sifted down through the trees and it was fun to scuffle the dry leaves with their feet.

"Sh!" said Ralph suddenly. "Sister, come here."

Sister was walking a little ahead and now she turned and came back to Ralph.

"I want to show you something," he said quietly. "Look—you, too, Brother—at that branch up there."

He pointed to a large oak tree whose branches overhung their path.

Brother and Sister stared, but saw nothing unusual.

"See the end of that branch, the one this way?" urged Ralph. "See that black lump that looks like a knot in the wood? That's Mr. Blacksnake, trying to pretend it's summer still."

"Maybe he's dead," whispered Sister, for the lump did not move.

"No, he's only cold," answered Ralph. "Don't throw a stone at him, Brother. First place, he might prove more lively than we give him credit for, and second place, there is no reason why we should try to hurt or kill him."

"Snakes bite," said Brother.

"Very few in our country," replied Ralph. "They really help farmers a great deal by eating mice and rats and hunting animals that eat chickens."

"But I don't mean to have any snakes," declared Sister positively, "when I'm a farmer."

Ralph said that she needn't, and by that time

they were out of the woods and in a pasture that seemed to stretch far away.

They found a whole row of hickory trees bordering a fence and they worked so hard and quickly that in almost no time they had the bag almost half full.

"We must start for the trolley now, if we don't want to be late for supper," said Ralph, looking at his watch. "Come, chicks, that's a good afternoon's work. I'll carry the bag, Brother."

"Will there be enough nuts to buy the sixty-eight candles?" asked Sister anxiously.

"More than enough," Ralph promised. "You'll probably have some money left for Christmas."

This made Brother and Sister feel very happy and they skipped all the way to the trolley. They had to wait a few minutes, but presently the familiar red and green car came in sight and they climbed aboard, Ralph carrying the bag of nuts, which was really heavy.

They had not gone very far before a crowd of workmen got on, some with pickaxes and some with shovels. They laughed loudly and talked in a queer language.

CHAPTER X

SISTER'S ADVENTURE

"WHERE are they going?" Brother whispered to Ralph.

"I think they're doing road work," replied the big brother. "You see they have their tools with them and they are probably going to a new place to work. We change cars in just a moment, and perhaps the next one will not be so crowded."

You see, they were not going home the same way they had come. When they walked through the woods they walked away from the trolley line that had brought them, and they must change cars at a certain place in order to get the trolley that ran to Ridgeway.

"Now press the button," said Ralph in a few moments. "Come, Sister."

Sister was not listening. She was looking at the pictures in a paper the man in the seat ahead of her was reading. When the car stopped and Ralph walked toward the door, the bag of nuts

over his shoulder, Brother followed him, but Sister sat still.

Ralph got off and turned to lift down Brother and Sister. Brother was right there, but after him five or six of the workmen got off, and Ralph wondered anxiously if Sister had been kept back by them.

"Clang, clang!" went the bell, and the trolley started.

Ralph shouted, but the conductor was so hemmed in by passengers that he could not see who was calling, and so did not stop the car.

"Oh, Ralph!" Brother began to cry. "Where will they take Betty?"

"I thought she was right behind you!" groaned poor Ralph. "How could I be so careless! I ought to have carried her instead of these silly nuts."

"She'll cry," said Brother, tears rolling down his own cheeks. "Where does the trolley go, Ralph?"

"I don't know—not far, I hope," answered Ralph, trying to speak cheerfully. "Let's go over to that house and ask them if they know."

There was a pretty little white house, a bit back from the road, and Ralph and Brother walked over to it. A woman came to the door when Ralph knocked.

"How far does the trolley go?" she repeated the question Ralph asked her. "Why, about two miles up the road, to Goldwaithe Junction. It's a single track, so that same car will be back in about half an hour, maybe a little more."

Ralph explained about Sister and how she came to be left on the car, and the woman was much interested.

"Why don't you telephone the Junction?" she asked. "You're welcome to use my telephone. I know the conductor on that car—his name is Albert Riggs. He'll look out for the little girl all right."

This was good news for Brother and Ralph, and when the latter had telephoned the car inspector at the Junction and asked him to be sure and see that Sister came back on the same car and was put off at the station where the Ridgeway car stopped, they both felt much better.

They sat on the steps of the kind woman's porch until a warning bell told them that the trolley was coming back. Then they both ran, for Ralph was more anxious than he cared to tell, down to the trolley track, and when the conductor lifted down Sister into Ralph's arms, they both tried to kiss her at once.

The Ridgeway car came along just then and there was only time for a hurried thank-you to

the conductor who had brought Sister back safely, and a wave to the good woman who had let Ralph telephone. Ralph kept tight hold of Sister as they entered the trolley, and when they found a seat he lifted her to his lap. He wasn't going to run the risk of losing her again.

"Where are the nuts?" asked Sister calmly. "You didn't lose them, did you?"

"They're here, I'm carrying 'em," said Brother proudly, though he hadn't much breath to talk with, for the bag was heavy.

"Were you frightened, dear?" asked Ralph. "What did you do when you found you were left on the trolley?"

"I cried some," admitted Sister. "I felt lonely. Then the conductor asked me where I wanted to get off, and I said I didn't know. So he said did I want to ride to the end of the line?"

"And you did," chimed in Brother.

"A man got on when we stopped," said Sister, "and he asked if there was a little girl named Betty Morrison on board. That was me. So he talked to the conductor and they gave me a glass of milk and said I was coming back to find you. And that's all."

"That's enough," declared Ralph. "Here we are at Ridgeway. No, don't get down, Sister;

I'll carry you off. We mustn't get separated again."

They stopped at the station and got Brownie, who was so glad to see them he nearly went crazy, and barked all the way home.

Of course there was a great deal to tell the family that night, about the nuts and the black-snake and Sister's trolley adventure, and every-one listened intently and looked at the nuts and said they were beauties. Before they went to bed that night Brother and Sister had taken the bag over to Grandma Hastings, and when they came home they each had fifty shining new pennies.

"Grandma said they were worth more than ordinary grocery-store nuts," reported Sister, showing Louise her money. "Our nuts were just as fresh and good, 'cause we picked them ourselves."

The next Monday, after school, Brother and Sister went shopping. They bought sixty-eight tiny pink candles with a little holder for each candle so that the wax should not drop down on Mr. Givens' cake and spoil the icing.

"And we've ever so much money left for Christmas," said Brother happily, when they were home again, counting the candles spread out on the dining-room table.

"I wish it was Friday, so we could help make the cake," declared Sister.

She didn't like to wait for things to happen, you see.

"There's Mickey," said Brother, who had seen the red-headed boy through the window. "Let's go out and tell him about the candles."

But Mickey had news for them.

"The sand table's come!" he cried. "I helped carry it in, Roddy. And Miss Gray says you and I can start the first village in the morning."

The first grade had been expecting their sand table ever since the opening of school, and this was welcome news for Brother, who loved to model in sand.

"We've got a sand table in our room," said Sister eagerly.

"Oh, the kindergarten can't play with their table the way we do," declared Mickey proudly. "We build whole towns and even start geography, don't we, Roddy?"

"Yes," nodded Brother. "And Christmas we have little pine trees. I'll be at school extra early tomorrow, Mickey; perhaps we can start the village before the bell rings."

CHAPTER XI

THE LOST STONE

THE next morning Brother and Sister hurried away to school twenty minutes earlier than they usually started. Brother was eager to see the sand table and Sister, of course, always went to school when he did.

They were almost the first ones at school and Miss Ardsley was just getting out the boxes for the kindergarten games when Sister marched into the kindergarten room. Miss Ardsley asked her to help her distribute the balls and colored papers, so Sister, who loved to be busy, was very glad she had come early.

Brother found Mickey waiting for him in Miss Gray's room. Mickey was up at six o'clock every morning and had his breakfast before he went to Miss Putnam's to do any errands she might wish done.

"Miss Gray had the janitor dump all the sand on top for us," explained Mickey to Brother, "and she said we could go ahead as soon as we got here."

Brother knew quite well how to set about making a village, because Jimmie had built a sandbox for them that very summer and Brother and Sister had had wonderful times playing in it. The little trees and houses and lamps for the streets were all in a large box under Miss Gray's desk, and the two boys worked so steadily that by the time the teacher and the rest of the class came, nearly half of the village was in place.

"How nicely you have done it!" said Miss Gray in a pleased tone, while the children crowded around to look. "Now take your seats, for the assembly bell is going to ring. After morning exercises, I'll show you how to do the story of Little Red Riding Hood."

When the class came back from the morning exercises in the big assembly hall, Miss Gray told them that the village Brother and Mickey had made was where Little Red Riding Hood's mother lived. She showed them where to put the trees to make a woods and how to hide the celluloid wolf behind the trees so that Little Red Riding Hood would not see him. The girls in an upper grade had dressed a tiny doll in a scarlet cloak and hood, and that, of course, was Red Riding Hood.

After they had played the story in the sand

table, the class went back to their desks and Miss Gray called on several pupils to tell the story in their own way. The recess bell rang as Brother was telling his story and after recess they had a writing lesson.

"Oh, my!" said Miss Gray suddenly, while she was bending over Norman Crane's desk, trying to help him make a nicer "S." "The stone is gone from my ring!"

Miss Gray always wore a beautiful ring on her right hand, a gold band set with a blue and a white stone. Brother knew the white stone was a diamond and the blue one a sapphire. He looked now as Miss Gray held up her hand and the white stone was not in the ring.

"It was there all right when I came back after recess," said Miss Gray sorrowfully. "It must have dropped on the floor. Let's look a little, children, and if we don't find it, I'll speak to the janitor and when he sweeps tonight he'll watch for it."

Although the class looked carefully, and several of the boys got down on their hands and knees and peered under the desks, they could not find the missing diamond.

Miss Gray was very sorry, but she said they would go on with the writing lesson and perhaps the janitor would find it when he swept.

Her eyes looked a little pink, as Sister's did when she cried, and Brother wondered if losing a diamond from a pretty ring would make a grown-up girl feel like crying.

All of Miss Gray's pupils loved her dearly and they were disappointed the next morning when she told them that the janitor had not found the stone.

"Sure, ma'am, I swept as though I was trying not to break cobwebs," explained Jerry Dorflin, the tall, thin janitor, earnestly. "I never took me eyes off the floor once; but not a sign of anything but dust did I see, and that's the honest truth."

He looked so anxious that, after he had gone, Miss Gray told another teacher she was sorry she had said anything about losing the stone.

"Jerry wouldn't take a piece of string that didn't belong to him," Brother heard her say, "and I'm afraid I've made him uncomfortable. I never would have mentioned it to him, only I'm as sure as can be I lost it in the room. I distinctly remember seeing it on my hand when I closed the windows after recess."

Mickey Gaffney was not at school that day, and Brother must wait till Monday to talk to him about the lost diamond. Sister, to whom he tried to talk, did not seem very interested.

"This is Friday, you know," she told Brother at noon. "You want to hurry home from school, 'cause Molly promised not to begin to make Mr. Givens' cake till you come. I'm going to scrape the icing bowl."

"Then I'm going to have the cake bowl," declared Brother. "I do hope Molly won't be too saving."

Both children hated to see Molly scrape her cake bowls too clean. She often told them she had to get every speck of the dough out clean because it was wasteful to leave any sticking to the sides of the bowl.

"But we eat it," Brother argued. "'Tisn't wasted if we eat it, Molly."

As soon as school was out that afternoon, he raced home and he and Sister made straight for the kitchen. They each sat on a high stool and watched while she creamed butter and sugar and whipped the eggs and stirred in flour and all the good things that go to make a good cake.

Then she turned the mixture into three layer-cake pans and said Brother might have the bowl and spoon.

Brother looked at Sister as Molly carried the cakes away to the oven. Sister looked at him wistfully.

"You can have half," said Brother fairly, "if you let me have half the icing bowl."

This suited Sister, and the way they scraped that cake bowl was, as Molly said, "a caution!"

While the cake was baking, Molly made the chocolate icing, and this, as you know if you have ever helped make cake, is the most exciting part. Brother and Sister loved to watch Molly spread the thick, dark smooth stuff between the layers of cake and then turn what was left over the top and spread it smoothly over all.

"There, now! Take that bowl and don't make yourselves sick," said Molly when the cake was iced. "When it's cold you can put the candles on."

Sister and Brother took turns once more licking the second bowl, and as they ate they admired the cake. It was really beautiful. They knew Mr. Givens would be delighted with it.

"When can we light the candles?" asked Sister happily.

"You can't carry any cake with lighted candles on it," said Molly firmly.

CHAPTER XII

SURPRISING MR. GIVENS

"OH, MOLLY!" Sister looked ready to cry. "It won't be a birthday cake, 'less it has candles."

"Well, of course I have nothing to say about it," declared Molly, beginning to wash her cake things, "but you'll hear what your father thinks if you ask him about taking burning candles down the street."

"Let's stick 'em in first," suggested Brother hopefully. "Daddy isn't home yet, so we can't ask him right away. Maybe Mr. Givens could come and get it."

"'Tisn't nice to ask folks to carry their own presents," retorted Sister. "You go get the candles, Roddy."

Brother ran off to ask Mother Morrison for the candles she had put away for them, and she came back with him.

"What a lovely cake!" she cried. "Anyone

would know it was meant for a birthday. It's a lucky thing Mr. Givens has his supper before we do, because I'm afraid if the boys ever saw that cake they would want a piece."

"I s'pect tomorrow night, when we don't have any, we'll be sorry," said Brother. "But I'm not yet—are you, Betty?"

Sister said no, and then she asked Mother Morrison whether they could light the candles on the cake the next night and carry it that way to Mr. Givens.

"They look so pretty all lit," she coaxed. "He might not know it was a birthday cake if he didn't see them lighted, Mother."

Mother Morrison and Molly both laughed and said that they thought sixty-eight candles, lighted or not, would be enough to remind anyone of a birthday.

"I tell you, Daughter, what I think will be the best plan," Mother smiled. "Mr. Givens has his supper every night at five o'clock. You and Brother may take the cake to his daughter's house a little before five, and go to the back door. She will be getting supper in the kitchen, and you ask her to please light the candles and carry the cake in to her father. You see, dears, it wouldn't be safe to carry lighted candles that distance, and by the time you reached the Givens

house, most of the candles would be burned out."

"That's so—they only last a little while," agreed Brother. "I remember the ones on my birthday cake; if you don't make your wishes and blow 'em right out they're burned up in a jiffy."

So it was settled how they were to carry the cake, and Brother and Sister had great fun sticking the sixty-eight candles into sixty-eight little cups and then putting the cups and candles on top of the cake. It was a very large cake, but the candles almost covered the top.

They didn't forget the cake for one minute. That night Sister dreamed she lit the candles when Brother wasn't looking and they burned the cake all up. And the first thing in the morning she ran downstairs to make sure it was safe in the cake can.

They wouldn't go to the football game in the next town, though Ralph said he would take them to see Jimmie play, because they might not get home in time to take the cake.

"It's Mr. Givens' birthday, and we're busy," explained Brother seriously.

Quarter of five that Saturday afternoon came at last, and a very proud little boy and girl walked to the house where Mr. Givens lived

with his married daughter, carrying something on a plate covered with a clean white napkin.

"Good land!" cried Mrs. Henry when she opened her kitchen door in answer to Brother's knock. "Did your mother send me something?"

"It's for Mr. Givens," said Brother politely.

"For his birthday," added Sister.

"Well, I never!" said Mrs. Henry in surprise. "What will Father say? We're not much of a hand in this house to fuss over birthdays, but I did plan to fry some oysters for his supper. Do you want to take the cake to him? He's reading the paper in the dining-room."

"Mother said you would light the candles and carry it," Brother told her.

"To be sure, you might set yourself afire," declared Mrs. Henry. "I'll light 'em, and you come along in with me; he'll be pleased as can be."

The sixty-eight candles made a beautiful blaze, and Brother and Sister followed Mrs. Henry eagerly as she walked into the dining-room carrying the cake.

"Father!" she cried loudly, for the old gentleman was rather deaf. "Father, look what somebody sent you!"

Mr. Givens dropped his paper on the floor and pushed his spectacles up on his forehead.

"I swan!" he said. "Who did it?"

"Roddy and Betty Morrison here," replied his daughter, putting the cake down on the table, and pointing to Brother and Sister, who felt a bit bashful now that Mr. Givens was actually looking at his cake.

Then Sister saw something that made her forget to be shy.

"They're melting!" she cried, pointing to the candles. "Make a wish, quick!"

But Mr. Givens didn't know how to make a wish and they had to tell him. Then he blew hard and everyone of the candles went out!

"I may be deaf, but my breath's good yet," said the old gentleman proudly. "This is the first birthday cake I ever had. Who told you it was my birthday?"

"Molly," answered Brother. "Didn't you have cakes when you were a little boy?" he asked curiously.

"Never," said Mr. Givens. "This is my first. And it's a beauty."

"We wish you many happy returns of the day," Sister said. "And we'll be late if we don't go now."

Mr. Givens shook hands with Brother and kissed Sister, and they left him looking at his cake.

"He'll talk about it for a week," declared his daughter, opening the front door to let them out. "Be sure and tell your mother I think it was the nicest thing to do—I never heard of two children taking so much trouble."

"He liked it, didn't he?" Brother said to Sister as they walked home. "Just suppose Molly never made us any birthday cake—wouldn't that be dreadful?"

"Yes, and I'm glad we're not going to have any cake for supper," announced Sister. "It will make it nicer thinking of Mr. Givens eating his cake. Though I do hope," added Sister, remembering how hungry she was, "that we have canned peaches or pears or something!"

CHAPTER XIII

MICKEY'S GREAT PLAN

MICKEY GAFFNEY walked to school with Brother and Sister the next Monday morning and heard all about Mr. Givens' birthday cake.

"Why didn't you come to school Friday?" Brother asked. "Miss Gray never found her diamond."

"Didn't she? Gee, that's too bad," answered Mickey. "She can't wear her ring with only one stone in it. I had a sore throat Friday," he explained, "and my mother wouldn't let me out."

Several little girl friends of Sister's caught up with them at the next corner, and Sister walked on with them, leaving Brother and Mickey alone.

"Do you know what I think?" began Mickey mysteriously as the little girls hurried on, "I think a burglar stole Miss Gray's diamond."

"A burglar?" gasped Brother. "What burglar?"

"How should I know?" asked Mickey with impatience. "I'm just saying I think a burglar took it."

"But how could he?" argued Brother. "She lost it in the daytime, right in school. A burglar couldn't steal anything with all of us watching him."

Mickey looked as vexed as a boy with freckles and a round, cheerful face could look.

"'Course he didn't steal it in the daytime, silly," he exclaimed. "Couldn't he find it on the floor at night and take it home? My father was reading in the paper last night where a burglar kept coming to a store every night for oh, ever so long. And every night he took something."

"Do you s'pose this one will come back?" whispered Brother, looking behind him as if he almost expected to see a burglar following him.

"Yes, I do," said Mickey earnestly, "and I tell you what we'll do. We'll be 'tectives, and catch him!"

"How?" asked Brother. "What do 'tectives do?"

Mickey was ready with an answer. He had made his plans while home Sunday and he was

so eager to try them out that it is to be feared he would have been disappointed if Miss Gray had found her diamond before he had a chance to play detective.

"We'll hide in the supply closet after school," said Mickey. "And then, when we see the burglar, we'll jump out and yell and the janitor will come and get him."

"In the night?" Brother wanted to know. "We won't have any supper."

"Well, maybe you'd better bring some with you when you come back this noon," planned Mickey. "I can't, 'cause Ma always puts away all the stuff left from dinner for my father's lunch when he's working. And he's working now."

Brother and Mickey had reached the school yard by this time, but it was only quarter of nine and they could sit down on the steps and talk about catching the burglar. The morning was cold and sharp and most of the scholars hurried into the warm building as fast as they could. Brother and Mickey were so excited they hardly knew it was cold.

"It will be kind of scary in the dark," said Brother doubtfully. "And, Mickey, I think the janitor goes home nights. He lives in that brick house down the next street, you know."

"He has to 'tend to the fire, round ten o'clock," Mickey insisted. "I heard him tell the coal man so. You're not afraid of the dark, are you?"

"I never stayed in it much," admitted Brother.

Neither, to tell the truth, had Mickey. And many people are very brave about things they know nothing of.

"Well, don't forget to bring some things to eat," were Mickey's last words as the warning bell rang. "Think how glad Miss Gray will be if we catch the burglar that took her diamond."

"Shall I tell my mother?" whispered Brother on his way upstairs.

"No-o, I guess not," decided Mickey . "She might get scared. Mothers always think you're going to be hurt."

Brother had hard work not to let Sister into the secret when they walked home together that noon. It was still harder work not to tell Mother Morrison, and when he asked for some bread and jelly and two apples to take back to school with him, she looked so surprised that he very nearly told her.

"Why, Brother, you've just eaten a big lunch!" she cried. "You have no afternoon recess—when you do expect to eat another lunch?"

"Mickey and I are going to do something," said Brother earnestly. "Please, Mother."

"Oh, well, if you and Mickey are going to play after school," smiled Mother Morrison, "I suppose you may be hungry. Are you coming straight home from school, dear?"

"Not right away," said Brother, wondering for the first time if she would worry when he didn't come home to supper.

"There's your bread and jelly," announced his mother, kissing him and putting a package in his hands. "And here are your apples—I'll slip them in your overcoat pocket. Don't stay out after four o'clock dear."

Mother Morrison was fond of Mickey and she had made the sandwiches extra large for his sake. She thought that likely, with such a large family as Mrs. Gaffney had, Mickey sometimes did not have quite all he wanted to eat at home.

"I think you might come home and play with me," complained Sister, following Brother to the door.

"I will tomorrow," declared Brother, running down the steps.

He was afraid, if he didn't get away from the house, he would tell what he and Mickey were planning to do.

"I don't see any fun in having a secret," he

thought to himself. "Grace and Louise are always having secrets and they like it. But I don't a single bit."

Brother, you see, didn't understand that his secret was spoiled because his mother did not share it with him. Grace and Louise could have told him that.

"Did you bring the supper?" Mickey asked him the first thing when they met in the yard. "I've been looking at the supply closet; it's plenty big enough for two."

"We'll have to wait till Miss Gray goes home, won't we?" said Brother. "She'll think it's funny if we hang around after school."

"It's my night to clean the blackboards," replied Mickey. "Mondays, you know, I don't have to run errands for Miss Putnam. You can stay and help me."

So after school that night, Brother and Mickey stayed when the rest of the class went home. Miss Gray was in a hurry to go to a club meeting.

"Don't dawdle, will you, boys?" she said to them, putting on her hat. "The janitor wants to sweep early tonight."

CHAPTER XIV

AN UNLUCKY SNEEZE

"WE'LL have to hide before the janitor comes," said Mickey, when the door had closed behind Miss Gray. "He'll chase us out if he sees us."

They worked busily at the blackboards, standing on chairs to reach the high places. When each board was rubbed clean, Mickey insisted they must hide in the supply closet.

"You don't know how soon the janitor'll come," he said. "Look out in the hall now and you'll see his broom and pail and mop. He's in Miss Kane's room now."

The supply closet was where Miss Gray kept the papers and pencils for her class and the extra books. It wasn't a very large closet, but there was a deep square space under the shelves where two small boys could squeeze themselves with care.

"Leave the door open a crack," directed Mickey. "We have to have some air to breathe."

Mickey was a year older than Brother and more used to planning things and carrying them out. Brother followed him into the closet and left the door open a little as he was told.

"It's kind of hot," he whispered. "I hope he doesn't take very long to sweep, Mickey."

The closet was very warm, for the steam pipes ran through it. Mickey's hand touched one in the dark and he said "Ow!" before he thought.

"Let's eat an apple," he said to Brother. "When you're eating it doesn't seem so long to wait."

"After he's through sweeping, can we come out?" asked Brother, biting into an apple and wishing he might be in a cooler place. "The burglar won't come till it's dark, will he?"

"No, I guess we can stay out a little while," said Mickey. "Sh! The janitor's coming!"

Through the crack left by the closet door they could see the big, gray-haired man who came into the room, carrying a mop and a broom and a large pail. He wore overalls and was whistling.

The boys expected him to go right to work sweeping, but he did a number of other things first. He put a cover over the top of Miss Gray's desk. Then he emptied her wastebasket into a large sack he dragged in from the hall.

Next he stopped and looked at the gold-fish in the bowl on the window-sill. To Brother and Mickey, who by this time were uncomfortably warm, it seemed as if he would never start to sweep.

At last he picked up the pail and sprinkled some stuff that looked like sawdust on the floor, and began to brush it up with the broom. He swept with great long strokes and he raised a cloud of dust that would have horrified Molly. Molly prided herself on never "raising a dust" when *she* swept a room.

The dust swirled about the room in little clouds. Some of it sifted in through the closet door and went right up Mickey's small, snub nose.

"Ker-choo! Ker-choo!" he sneezed.

The janitor straightened up and looked toward the closet. Mickey felt another sneeze coming, but he couldn't stop it to save his life.

"Ker-choo! Ker-choo!" he sneezed again.

The janitor dropped his broom and strode over to the supply closet. He jerked open the door.

"You come out of that!" he roared in a terrible voice. "I've caught ye red-handed this time!"

Mickey was used to being teased about his

"YOU CAN TELL THE PRINCIPAL WHY YOU WERE HIDING IN THAT CLOSET."

red hair and he supposed that being red-handed had something to do with that. Brother didn't suppose anything at all. He was too frightened.

"Come on out!" repeated the janitor.

He put in his big hand and pulled Mickey forward. Then he did the same to Brother, and when he had them both on the floor he took a firm grip on their collars.

"So there's two of you!" he said grimly. "Aren't you ashamed of yourselves!"

"We weren't doing anything," protested Mickey. "Were we, Roddy?"

The janitor shook them angrily.

"I don't suppose you expect me to believe a word you say," he scolded. "And you're right, for I don't. I'll just march you down to the principal, and you can tell him what you were doing hiding in the closet."

The principal! Brother looked at Mickey. The principal and his office were two things the pupils avoided unless something awful happened that sent them there. Very bad boys were sent by their teachers, and sometimes errands took good boys there, but the office was an uncomfortable place at best and the principal a person to be spoken of in whispers.

"Come along with you!" said the janitor

harshly. "I've been watching for you for the last two weeks. You won't have another chance to make way with things."

Brother and Mickey had not the least idea what he was talking about, but they were both thoroughly frightened as, with his hands still on their collars, the janitor pushed them before him and marched them down the front stairs.

The principal's office was near the front door and it had a sign on it "OFFICE." Neither Brother nor Mickey had ever been inside.

The janitor knocked—with his foot, because he would not let go of either boy's collar—and a pleasant voice called, "Come in."

A push of his foot opened the door and the three found themselves in a shabby, comfortable-looking room, with a brown leather couch by the one large window and a great wide desk heaped with papers at one end.

A white-haired man was writing at this desk, and his back was to the door so that he did not see them.

"Just a minute," he said, making his pen race swiftly over the paper.

He blotted what he had written, then turned in his revolving chair and faced the three callers. For a moment they all stared.

What Brother and Mickey saw was a young

man with smiling blue eyes under the white hair and a pleasant brown face that looked as though it liked to laugh.

What the principal saw was a scowling, grim janitor in blue overalls, holding two small boys whose faces were red with the heat of the stuffy closet and streaked with dust and tears.

"Well, Dorflin, what in the world have you there?" asked the principal at last.

Brother and Mickey were so surprised at the janitor's reply they forgot to be frightened.

"I've caught the two boys that have been stealing scratch paper and pencils these last few weeks," said the janitor loudly.

CHAPTER XV

TRYING TO EXPLAIN

THIS was more than Mickey could stand. "Don't you dare call me a thief!" he sputtered. "I'll tell my father."

"Well, Dorflin, whatever they've done, they are not going to run away," said the principal in his pleasant voice. "Suppose you let them sit down on the sofa while we straighten matters out."

"Just as you say, Mr. Alexander," agreed the janitor, letting go of the two coat-collars, "but I warn you they're a bad lot. I found them hiding in the supply closet in Miss Gray's room when I went in to sweep up."

"Sit down on the sofa, boys," said Mr. Alexander quietly. "Now I want you to tell me just exactly what you were doing in the closet. One at a time, please."

The sofa was near the side of the desk and when Mickey and Brother sat down on it, Mr. Alexander turned his chair so that he faced them.

"Just tell me what you were doing there?" he encouraged them. "Were you hiding?"

"Yes," said Mickey, finding his voice. "We were going to catch a burglar!"

The janitor snorted. Evidently he did not believe this. He opened his mouth to speak, but the principal held up his hand.

"Don't interfere, please, Dorflin," he said. "What burglar were you going to catch, Mickey?" he asked.

Mickey was surprised that Mr. Alexander knew his name. He did not know that he also knew the name of every child in his school and most of them by sight.

"The burglar who stole Miss Gray's diamond," answered Mickey bravely. "Weren't we, Roddy?"

"Yes," said Brother. "They come back after more things."

Of course Mr. Alexander had heard of Miss Gray's lost diamond. Everyone in school had. Dorflin had been very uneasy about it because he had not found it for her when he swept the schoolroom.

"But why were you there this afternoon?" asked Mr. Alexander. "A burglar wouldn't come till after dark, would he? And how did you expect to catch him?"

Mickey drew a long breath. He was tired and hot and the janitor had spoiled his plan for catching the thief.

"We had to hide right after school 'cause we knew the janitor would chase us out," he explained, beginning to cry. "And if we went home, our mothers wouldn't let us out again. We were going to jump on him and hold him till somebody came. Weren't we, Roddy?"

"Oh, Mr. Alexander, don't you believe him!" cried Dorflin, the janitor. "There's been someone taking pencils and paper and anything left around loose for the last week or so. The teachers have about drove me crazy complaining. I'll bet a cooky these are the boys. Ask 'em what's in that package the little one's got."

Brother tore eagerly at the string and paper that covered the sandwiches.

"It's our supper!" he cried. "We thought maybe the burglar wouldn't come till as late as nine o'clock and we might get hungry. We ate the apples."

What do you suppose the principal and the janitor—that cross janitor—did then?

They laughed.

Mr. Alexander laughed so hard he had to get out his handkerchief and wipe his eyes, and the janitor leaned up against the desk and made it

shake. Then, when they had finished laughing, they happened to look at each other, and goodness! they began laughing again.

"Well, I guess I was wrong," admitted the janitor, when he had stopped laughing the second time. "I never heard of taking your supper along to wait for a burglar, but it isn't a bad plan. I'll go back and finish sweeping now."

He went off, and Mr. Alexander talked a little to Brother and Mickey about their plan and explained that he did not think a burglar had taken the diamond.

"I'm sure Miss Gray will be glad to hear that you were interested enough to try to help her find it," he said kindly. "I begin to think, and she does, too, that she must have lost it outdoors; it may have dropped from the ring when she was closing one of the windows. If I were you I wouldn't think too much about it, and above all, don't try to be detectives again."

Before he let them go he showed them his case of curious carved shells and the stuffed squirrel that, he told them, had been a pet of his when he was a schoolboy.

"Now remember we're friends," he said when he said good-bye. "There's nothing to be afraid of in my office, is there?"

"I like him, don't you?" said Brother, run-

ning to keep up with Mickey. "Oh, it's most dark!"

It was nearly five and it was almost dark indeed. They had to go back to their classroom to get their hats and coats, and very strange and queer the room seemed at that hour. Coming out, they met Dorflin, the janitor, in the hall. He snapped on an electric light at the head of the stairs.

"The gates are locked and I'll have to let you out," he said, taking a big bunch of keys from his pocket. "If you climbed the fence somebody else might take you for burglars; and once in a day is enough, isn't it?"

Brother and Mickey thought it was. When they were safely through the gate they joined hands and ran as hard as they could till they reached the corner of the street where Mickey lived.

"See you tomorrow," said Mickey, and he ran down the street toward his house, while Brother went straight ahead toward his house.

Halfway there, Jimmie met him.

"For the love of Mike!" that big brother cried. "Where have you been? Mother has been worried half sick about you. She telephoned the school at half-past four, and some one answered that there was no one in Miss

Gray's room, so we knew you weren't kept in. What have you been doing?"

Brother slipped his hand in Jimmie's.

"Mickey and I," he explained, "were trying to catch a burglar."

Daddy and Mother Morrison, Ralph and Dick and Louise and Grace and Sister were all waiting for Brother when he and Jimmie came in. They had been really worried and they were very, very glad to see him.

"My dear little son!" cried his mother, hugging him tightly. "How could you stay away like this? What happened to you?"

"Nothing much," said Brother, who didn't want any more people to laugh at him that afternoon. "I brought the sandwiches back, Mother, so's not to waste 'em."

"He and Mickey were after burglars!" laughed Jimmie, and then, of course, Brother had to tell.

CHAPTER XVI

WHERE THE DOUGHNUT WENT

POOR Brother had to stand a good deal of teasing from his family, after they had heard the story of how he and Mickey had tried to play detectives.

"What's that noise?" Jimmie would say, pretending to be frightened.

"Brother, do you think a burglar is trying to get in?" Dick would ask.

But Sister did not see anything funny. She thought Brother and Mickey had been very brave to even think of catching a burglar, and she, too, believed that perhaps the thief who had taken Miss Gray's missing stone would come back.

"I tell you what I think you ought to do," she said to Brother one night after they were in bed and Mother Morrison had put out the light and gone downstairs. They slept in two little rooms that were connected by a door and it was easy to call to each other. "Do you re-

member that story Louise read us once, 'bout the bad boy who stole all the other children's lunches?"

"Yes, and Mrs. Smith put red pepper in Tommy Smith's doughnut, and the bad boy ate it and ran for a drink of water, and everybody knew he had been stealing their lunch," cried Brother. "I remember. That was a nice, long story."

"Well, why don't you put red pepper in a doughnut and leave it where the robber can eat it?" suggested Sister.

"But he'd eat it in the middle of the night and nobody would see him go get a drink of water," objected Brother. "What good would it do?"

Sister hadn't thought of that.

"You could put it in the doughnut anyway," she said finally. "Maybe after he ate it, he wouldn't come back any more."

This sounded reasonable to Brother, and he began to plan how he could get a doughnut and some red pepper to put in it. While he was planning he fell asleep and the next thing he knew it was morning.

"Brother, will you leave my collars at the laundry on your way to school?" asked Ralph when he came down to breakfast. "Tell them I

must have them by Friday. And here's a brand-new five-cent piece for you—the errand is worth that because you'll have to start early."

There were many little stores to pass before they came to the laundry, and Sister stopped short before one window, jerking Brother's elbow to make him look.

"You could buy one of those," she said to him, pointing to a plate of big, sugary doughnuts.

Doughnuts, the bakery man assured them, were expensive. Those in the window were three cents apiece, and he had some better ones, covered with icing, for five cents each.

"That one's good enough for a burglar," whispered Sister, "and anyway, you have to buy the red pepper."

So Brother bought one of the three-cent doughnuts and the bakery man put it in a little paper bag.

The laundry was the next store and there they left Ralph's collars, not forgetting to tell the young woman clerk who took the package that he must have them by Friday.

"There's a grocery store across the street," said Brother when they came out of the laundry. "I guess they sell red pepper."

There was a boy sweeping off the step and though he looked surprised when Brother asked

him for two cents' worth of red pepper, he very kindly measured it out and wrapped it in a little white paper.

"We'd better fix the doughnut now," declared Brother, as they trotted on to school from the grocery store. "We might not have time in school."

He and Sister sat down on somebody's stone step and took the doughnut out of the bag.

"It's a nice one, isn't it?" said Sister wistfully.

"Do you want a little, tiny bite?" asked Brother generously. "A burglar wouldn't notice a very little bite, I guess."

"Will you take one, too?" said Sister. "I won't, 'less you will."

"All right, but just a weeny piece," insisted Brother, holding out the doughnut for Sister to bite.

She bit off a little piece and Brother nipped off a little chunk, and there were two holes in that round, sugary doughnut.

"They show kind of plain, don't they?" said Brother anxiously. "We ought to bite in the same place and then the burglar wouldn't be so apt to see it."

"Then let's join the holes," suggested Sister, who thought it was the best doughnut she had

ever tasted. "If we each take a bite over this side, then it will look like one big bite."

But after they had each bitten off another piece, half of the doughnut was gone!

"There isn't much room to put the red pepper now," remarked Brother discontentedly.

"Well, then, don't put it in," said Sister. "I don't believe a burglar would touch a doughnut that somebody had been eating, anyway. We could eat the rest of it, you know."

"But there's the red pepper," said Brother, who hated to give up a plan. "What'll we do with that?"

"Throw it away," replied Sister recklessly. "If we took it home Molly would want to know where we got it and then they'd laugh some more about burglars."

"Well—all right," said Brother slowly. "Only I would like to find Miss Gray's diamond for her. Here, you take half the doughnut."

They ate it up in a second and threw the paper of pepper into an ash can standing on the curb. Then they had to run every step of the way to school to keep from being late. And that was the last of Sister's grand plan for catching the burglar.

CHAPTER XVII

BROTHER CAN DANCE

EVERY Saturday afternoon Brother and Sister went to dancing-school. Sometimes Mother Morrison took them, once or twice Daddy went with them. Grace and Louise were usually too busy, for when girls are fifteen and in high school they have a great many important things to do.

"How would you like me to take you to dancing-school this Saturday?" asked Ralph one evening.

"Oh, Ralph, will you?" cried Sister, throwing her arms around his neck and hugging him as hard as she could. "Will you, honestly?"

"You won't see much," said Brother, looking up from the picture puzzle he was putting together on the floor.

Brother privately thought dancing-school was rather silly, even if the cadets at West Point did have to learn to dance. He was sure that when

he was a soldier he would spend all his time firing a big cannon, not dancing with girls.

"I want to see Sister curtesy," said Ralph, smiling.

"I can do that now," announced Sister proudly.

She stood up and put one little foot back of the other. Then she bobbed her head, bent her knee and looked triumphantly at Ralph.

"Bravo!" he cried. "I think you're entitled to come to the party."

"What party?" asked Brother and Sister together.

"Now, Ralph, what did you want to say that for?" scolded Louise, who was knitting a sweater over by the fireplace. "You know perfectly well they'll be in bed hours before we begin."

"Are you going to have a party?" said Brother eagerly.

"Yes, we are," replied Louise. "Grace and I are going to entertain the Sophomore class. But you and Sister will be sound asleep while the party is going on. We'll save you some of the cake for the next day."

"If you're going to dance, I don't want to come," said Brother with dignity, "but I wouldn't mind having some cake and ice-cream."

"I'd like to come," declared Sister. "I could wear my white net dress and pink beads."

"Now you see——" Louise looked vexed. "Ralph, I wish you wouldn't always tell everything you know."

"Never mind," said Ralph cheerfully. "There's no harm done. Brother and Sister will be sailing around in the Land of Nod as usual, and Dick and I are going to spend the night in town. As Brother says, if you're going to dance, I don't want to come to the party."

"Well, you needn't," answered Louise. "Jimmie is coming, and we'll have all the boys we need."

"When is the party?" Sister wanted to know.

"Oh, not till next week," said Louise. "Don't you want to come and hold some wool for me to wind, Sister?"

Sister loved to hold wool and she soon forgot about the party. Ralph was going to dancing-school with them the next Saturday and that was something pleasant to think of. The children were always delighted when Ralph could go anywhere with them.

Even Brother was more cheerful than usual the next Saturday afternoon when Molly was helping them to dress. Dancing-school was at two o'clock, and they had to begin to get ready

to go soon after lunch. Mother Morrison and Grandma Hastings had gone shopping again, but Mother had left all Sister's pretty clothes spread out on her bed and the suit Brother was to wear on his bed. Molly knew just what to do, for she had often helped them.

"Most ready?" Ralph called up from the hall. "Don't forget the hair-ribbon, Molly," he cautioned.

Molly laughed and Brother shouted back that Sister's hair-ribbon was already on. Indeed, they were both ready to go, except for their hats and coats and the slippers which Sister carried in a brown silk bag. She carried Brother's for him, because no little boy with a sister to go to dancing school with is expected to carry his own slippers. You've noticed that? The boys who stuff their pumps in their pockets have no little sisters with brown silk bags.

"Now we're off," said Ralph, when the children came downstairs, snugly buttoned into coats, for the November wind was whistling outside as he waited for them. "Miss Florrie wouldn't want you to be late."

Brother liked Miss Florrie, if she did teach dancing, and she always remembered to smile at him across the big room as soon as he came in. Ralph sat down on one of the chairs against the

wall when they reached Miss Florrie's house, and Brother and Sister went into the dressing-room to change their shoes for slippers.

"Toot! Toot!" went Miss Florrie's whistle, just as Sister buttoned the last strap, and the boys and girls came running to get in line.

Brother didn't mind the line. They all stood up and did just as Miss Florrie did, and his feet behaved pretty well. But when she gave the signal for them to choose partners—which meant you were supposed to dance with a girl—poor Brother's troubles always began.

There were an even number of boys and girls in the class, and he always tried to get Sister to dance with him. So did a plump, yellow-haired boy who was a good dancer and knew it. Sometimes the plump boy reached Sister first, and sometimes Brother was ahead of him.

"I wouldn't mind not dancing with Betty," Brother had once explained to Mother Morrison, "if I could always dance with the same other girl. But you can't. I get a different one to dance with every time and their feet aren't a bit alike."

Today Brother forgot to worry about what might happen when he had to choose a partner, for he was thinking about the pretty ring that sparkled and glittered on Miss Florrie's hand.

The ring reminded him of Miss Gray's ring and the stone she had lost so mysteriously.

"Toot! Toot!" went the whistle as a signal that the line lesson was ended.

"Ask your partners for the waltz," said Miss Florrie.

The yellow-haired boy made a rush for Sister before Brother could start, and when the confusion was over and everyone was ready for the music, Brother found that he had no partner at all.

"Mabel Jackson couldn't come today," explained Miss Florrie, smiling at him. "That makes us one girl short; I'm afraid you'll have to ask me, Brother."

Dancing with Miss Florrie was the easiest thing in the world. Brother had danced once with her, and he knew. He forgot that he had any feet and the hard corners and turns bothered him not a bit. Brother had actually *liked* to dance with his teacher as a partner.

So now he walked over to where she stood smiling, and made her a polite little bow. The girl at the piano began the pretty music.

"One, two, three, one, two, three," counted Miss Florrie softly, and they started.

After the waltz came another dance, and this time Brother reached Sister before the plump

boy could. Then they had two more lessons in line and then the march. And Brother marched with Miss Florrie.

"I didn't know you could dance so well," said Ralph, when Brother came over and sat down beside him while the class made their curtsies to Miss Florrie. "You dance as nicely as Fayette Ames, and this is his second term."

Fayette was the yellow-haired boy who would insist on dancing with Sister.

"I don't always do everything right," confessed Brother, unwilling to take too much praise. "Miss Florrie makes a difference."

CHAPTER XVIII

SISTER'S UNLUCKY DAY

SISTER came down to breakfast one morning feeling decidedly unhappy. Nothing seemed to be right. Her new dress wasn't finished, and if it had been finished, it was raining and she couldn't have worn it. She thought there were two reasons for being unhappy.

"I don't like oatmeal," she grumbled over her blue bowl. "I don't see why I can't have coffee to drink instead of milk; Nina Gaffney has coffee lots of times."

After breakfast she couldn't find her rubbers and she scolded Brother because he couldn't remember where she had put them. Even Ralph couldn't coax her to smile when he kissed her and made believe to tickle her. No'm, Sister wasn't going to be happy that morning, anyone might see that.

"Here's your rubbers, dear," said Mother Morrison, coming downstairs with the missing articles in her hand. "Now be a good girl, and have a pleasant day."

"Miss Gray says rainy days we have to make our own sunshine," reported Brother, who was waiting with the umbrella. "Come on, Sister, it's most quarter of."

But out on the porch, Sister refused to budge a step unless she could hold the umbrella.

"I'm going to carry it," said Brother firmly. "Girls don't hold umbrellas over boys. Besides," he added, "you let it drip down my neck."

"You shan't carry it!" cried Sister, trying to take the umbrella from him. "It's my turn."

Brother wouldn't let go, and they almost fell down the front steps, while they tugged and pulled at the handle of the umbrella.

"What do you call it you're doing?" cried Ralph sternly, opening the door as he heard the sound of scuffling. "Sister, I'm surprised at you!"

Ralph was usually gone before the children started for school, and they had forgotten he had planned to take a later train that morning.

"Can't I carry the umbrella, Ralph?" asked Sister. "Roddy always has it."

"Well, it's his place to hold it over you," said Ralph. "You never saw Mother carrying an umbrella for Father, did you? Now I'll open it and you walk along together without any more

fuss; it's quarter of nine and if you don't look out you'll be late."

Ralph put up the umbrella and handed it to Brother. Sister did not dare quarrel any more, but she wouldn't kiss Ralph good-bye and she splashed off beside Brother, naughtily determined to step in every puddle she came to.

She didn't feel any happier when she reached kindergarten, though they sang the sunshine song and all the electric lights were turned on to make the schoolroom brighter because it was so dark outside.

After the number game, Miss Ardsley said they might choose any game they wished to play.

"I want to play in the little house," said Sister.

The little house was built of cardboard and stood in one corner of the room. It was just large enough for one child and had a cunning little door and two windows. Usually Miss Ardsley gave permission to play in the little house to a boy or girl who had been very, very good for a certain length of time or who had done something especially fine, like not forgetting to put his scissors back in the box for a whole week.

"Why, Sister!" said Miss Ardsley, when Sister asked to play in the little house. "I meant a game we all could play. Besides, it is Harry

Bennett's turn to play in the house; I said he should be next."

"I want to play in it—I don't want to play games," sobbed Sister, who was beginning to feel sorrier and sorrier for herself.

"Well, Harry, suppose we let Sister play with the house a little while, and you may have it next," said Miss Ardsley cheerfully. "We'll play the flower game, and perhaps the music will make Sister feel better."

Miss Ardsley liked her boys and girls to be happy and she saw that the weather—or something—was spoiling Sister's whole morning. Usually she was as gay and sweet-tempered as any little girl in the kindergarten class.

Sister opened the door of the little cardboard house and went in to play, while the class began the flower game. Each one chose the name of a flower and then Miss Ardsley pretended to plant them in her garden and to watch and wait for them to grow. As each little flower popped out of the ground he sang a song. That was how Miss Ardsley could tell her seeds were growing.

This morning, before she had all the "seeds" planted, some one sent for her to come to the principal's office.

"I won't be gone a minute," she said hurriedly. "Be good till I come back."

They meant to be good, dear me, of course they did. But Sister was playing around in the little house and pretending to dust the furniture and making more noise than was really necessary. Harry decided that she had played in the little house long enough.

"It's my turn," he cried, as Sister shook her handkerchief out of one of the windows. She made believe it was a duster.

"'Tisn't!" retorted Sister. "I'm going to stay in here just as long as I please."

"Miss Ardsley said to be good," Nina Gaffney reminded them timidly.

Nina was a dear little girl, and she hated to hear anyone quarrel.

Sister began to hum to herself, as though she were very happy, though really she was not comfortable at all, and Harry lost his temper.

He jerked open the door of the cardboard house and tried to go in. There wasn't room for two children in the house, and Sister tried her best to push him back. So when Miss Ardsley opened the door of her room she saw Harry's feet sticking out of the doorway of the house and the other children standing in a circle listening to the noise of the struggle as Sister and he, flat on the floor, pushed and pulled each other and said "I won't!" and "You will!"

Well, the rest of the morning was rather sad, of course. Miss Ardsley made them sit quietly in little chairs at opposite sides of the room, and neither Sister nor Harry could play any of the games or get up and walk around even at recess. And when kindergarten was over, she talked to them very seriously, and they both cried a little and promised never to act like that again.

"For you were both to blame," said Miss Ardsley softly. "No boy should ever fight a girl, but girls must play fair too, and not provoke a boy just because they know he isn't supposed to touch them."

Then she kissed them both and sent them home.

Brother had waited for Sister, and when she came out he saw that she had been crying.

"You can carry the umbrella if you want to," he said quickly.

But Sister had looked out of the window as she put on her coat and hat.

"I don't want to carry it," she answered. "It isn't raining any more."

She smiled sunnily, for the indoor clouds had disappeared, too, and Sister was her little merry self again.

CHAPTER XIX

THE PARTY

"OF COURSE we don't want to come to the party," confided Brother to Molly, who was sweeping the upstairs hall, "because we never want to go where we're not invited; do we, Betty? But I think they might save us some ice-cream."

It was the day of the party Louise and Grace were to give their high school friends, and Molly was working hard to have the whole house clean and neat for them.

Downstairs Louise and Grace were busy arranging the living-room and dining-room and Brother and Sister knew that out in the kitchen were four beautiful cakes and piles of sandwiches for what Sister called the "'freshments" for the party.

"Do you suppose they will save us any ice-cream?" persisted Brother.

"It won't keep, dearie," answered Molly, good-naturedly trying to dust while Brother

hung over the banisters right in her way. "Once the freezers are opened, I can't pack the cream again so it will keep till morning."

"Maybe we can have some before the party," said Sister hopefully.

But Molly said no, she didn't think so, because Jason, the ice-cream man, wasn't going to bring it till eight or nine o'clock.

"Well, maybe it won't be the kind we like, anyway," Brother said, trying to be consoling.

"But there isn't any kind we don't like," declared Sister truthfully.

Molly shook the carpet-sweeper over a folded newspaper and something white and shiny dropped out with a gray cloud of dust.

"What was that?" asked Brother, interested, as Molly picked it up and put it carefully in her apron pocket.

"A pearl button," she answered. "It must be off one of the boys' shirts. I always save 'em for your mother's button-box."

"I thought maybe it was a diamond," said Brother.

"A diamond!" chuckled Molly. "I guess we'd know it if anybody in this house lost a diamond. Did your teacher ever find the one she lost out of her ring?"

"No, and she never wears the ring any more,"

answered Brother sadly. "The janitor hasn't any sweeper, or we could look in that and maybe find it for her."

All that day the preparations for the party went on. The house was dusted and swept, and Ralph sent some flowers from the city, although he couldn't be persuaded to come to the party. He said there would be too many girls.

Louise and Grace insisted that Brother and Sister should go to bed before the guests began to arrive, and they promised the chilren to help them make candy the next Saturday morning if they would go without any fuss.

"Can Brownie sleep in my bed?" demanded Brother.

"Let me have the light clock?" asked Sister.

Mother Morrison said that as they were not going to the party, she thought that Brownie might sleep with Brother and that Sister might have the "light clock" to stand on her bureau for one night. Brownie usually slept in the kitchen and Molly was glad to have him out of the way because, of course, she would be busy there and you couldn't expect a dog to sleep while cake and ice-cream were being served almost under his nose.

The "light clock" was a little white clock with an illuminated dial. Daddy Morrison had

given it to Louise for a birthday gift, and you could tell what time it was in the dark by looking at the hands and figures which glowed with a white light. Sister couldn't tell time very well, but she thought this was a wonderful clock.

They went to bed at the usual time, the light clock on Sister's bureau, and Brownie lying on the blanket at the foot of Brother's bed. They meant to stay awake and listen to the party, for they knew the guests would have to come upstairs to the guest-room to take off their wraps, and the guest-room was right across the hall from their two little rooms.

But almost as soon as Mother Morrison tucked them in bed, they were fast asleep. They never even heard the company come laughing and talking upstairs and then trip down again, ready for the evening's fun. Brownie growled a little when some one laughed a bit louder than the rest, but Brother never even heard that.

Sister was the one who woke up after she had been asleep for hours, or so she thought. She sat up in bed and listened. The piano downstairs was being played and a girl was singing. Louise, probably; Louise sang very sweetly.

"I wonder if the ice-cream came?" said Sister to herself.

She looked over on the bureau, and though she could see the clock shining there, she could not tell what time it was. She tumbled out of bed and pattered into Brother's room.

"Roddy," she whispered, shaking him gently. "Roddy, come count what time it is; maybe the ice-cream has come and Molly will give us some."

Brother was awake in a minute and slipped out of bed to go and look at the clock. Both he and Sister wore white flannel suits that covered them completely, even their feet. The windows in each room were open, but the children did not feel cold.

"It says half-past nine," announced Brother, after he had studied the clock a moment. "I guess Jason has brought it by this time."

"Come on, and we'll ask Molly to give us some," said Sister, putting on her slippers. "We can go down the back stairs and nobody will see us. If we wear our wrappers and slippers Molly won't scold."

Brother had a dark red flannel wrapper and red felt slippers, and Sister's were dark blue. They put them on and then opened the door into the hall. The light was turned low and there was no one in sight.

"Shut the door so Brownie can't get out,"

BROTHER AND SISTER AND BROWNIE HAD GONE TO SLEEP.

whispered Brother, taking hold of Sister's hand.

They could hear the people downstairs laughing and talking as they crept toward the back stairs and went breathlessly down them to the kitchen door. Brother pushed it open and looked in.

"My land, what are you doing here?" said the astonished Molly.

"Did Jason bring the ice-cream?" asked Sister. "What kind is it?"

"I never saw such children!" groaned Molly. "Can't you think of anything but something to eat? I'm just getting ready to serve the refreshments now. Miss Louise wanted them at ten o'clock."

"Can't we have just a little?" pleaded Brother. "We can take it upstairs and eat it, Molly. Is it choc'late?"

"Chocolate and vanilla," admitted Molly. "Well, I guess as long as you woke up your mother won't care if you have a plate. Ice-cream won't hurt you and it isn't very late. Will you promise to go right to bed as soon as you've eaten your cream?"

Brother and Sister promised and watched with eager eyes as Molly went toward the pantry for plates.

CHAPTER XX

THE SAND-BOX PIN

SHE put a spoonful of chocolate ice-cream and one of vanilla in a deep saucer and handed it to Sister. Then she fixed a second saucer exactly like it for Brother and handed it to him. Next she cut two slices of sponge cake and put them on a plate with two paper napkins and two spoons.

"Now run along with you and don't bother me again to-night," she said good-naturedly.

"Thank you ever so much, Molly," said Brother and Sister gratefully, as they pattered upstairs, carrying their 'freshments carefully.

"We can sit at the top of the stairs and eat it," said Sister when they reached the second floor. "It's so cold in our rooms, Roddy, with the windows up. Let's get Brownie and give him some."

Brother thought this was a good plan, and he and Sister and Brownie sat down together on the top step to eat their ice-cream and cake.

They could hear the music and talk and watch the girls in their pretty dresses and the boys, who all wore their best clothes, too. Jimmie was talking to a girl with very white teeth and dimples that went in and out as she laughed.

"We must go to bed in a minute," said Brother, when they had finished eating and put the saucers and plates and spoons in a neat little pile at one side. "Are you cold, Betty?"

"Not exactly," answered Sister, hugging Brownie closer. "That was an ice-cream shiver."

It was fun to watch the party, and no one was more surprised than Brother and Sister when the next thing they knew someone stumbled over them and Jimmie's voice cried, "For the love of Mike!"

That was Jimmie's favorite expression, and when she heard it Sister knew who had her in his arms. She was so sleepy she merely opened her eyes for half a second, smiled into the face of the boy who had come upstairs with Jimmie, and then went to sleep again.

You see, Brother and Sister, and Brownie, too, had gone to sleep, huddled in a little heap there at the top of the stairs. Jimmie, running up the steps, two at a time, with a boy who

wanted to leave early, had walked right into them.

Jimmie tucked them both into bed and after that they did not wake up again until Mother Morrison came in to say it was time for them to get ready for Sunday school. People who *will* go to parties, you know, never wake up very early the next morning.

Soon after the party everyone began to talk about Thanksgiving. It wasn't very near, to be sure, but it was coming. Miss Ardsley told her kindergarten class that they must learn some new songs to sing at the school entertainment, and Brother came home with the news that he was expected to speak a piece.

"And you and Grandma and everybody can come hear me say it," he told his mother. "Miss Gray hasn't picked it out yet, but she said next week she'll tell us all what to do."

"I think I'll move the sand-box into the barn, Mother," said Jimmie coming home early from playing football one afternoon to find Brother and Sister playing football in the yard with an old worn-out ball. "There's no sense in letting the sand get snowed under, and next year the children will be glad to have it to play with."

Brother and Sister helped Jimmie carry in

the sand-box, holding one end while he took the other. The barn was fitted up as a gymnasium, and the older boys had great fun in it.

"Don't you want to turn over the sand a little?" asked Jimmie of Brother. "Take your shovel and stir it around so if it is damp it will have a better chance to dry. I'm going to mend this glove."

Jimmie sat down to sew up a slit in one of his leather boxing-gloves, and Brother and Sister began to churn up the sand in the sand-box. Jimmie had built the box for them and they had played with it all summer out under the horse-chestnut tree in the yard.

"Oh, look out!" cried Sister suddenly, grabbing Brother's shovel. "I saw something, Roddy; where did it go—there! Look!"

She held up something her quick eyes had seen shining in the sand.

"It's a pin," said Jimmie, who had come over to see what she had found. "Nothing much—guess it's from the five and ten-cent store."

"Isn't it gold?" asked Sister, much disappointed, and turning over the little cheap pin in her fingers.

It was a flat bar and had three blue stones in it.

"Only brass, dear," said Jimmie. "No one

shed any tears over it when they lost it, that's one consolation."

"Who lost it?" asked Brother, puzzled. "How did it get in our sand-box?"

"Why, I suppose somebody last summer, or maybe two or three summers ago, some girl lost it while she was taking a walk on the beach," explained Jimmie. "Then when Dad sent down to Beach Harbor for a load of sand to fill your sand-box, a man with a big shovel scooped up the pin with the sand, and it's been tumbling around it ever since. It's funny we didn't find it before."

Brother said nothing. But he thought. Goodness, how he did think! It seemed to him that he just couldn't wait to get to school the next morning.

"Are you going to school now?" asked Daddy Morrison in surprise the next morning when Brother and Sister were heard asking Molly if the oatmeal wasn't done. "Mother, these youngsters want to go to school at eight o'clock."

"This must be an unusual day," smiled dear Mother Morrison. "What is it, Brother? Have you and Mickey a new game you want to play?"

Brother shook his head.

"I've got something on my mind," he said

seriously. "But I don't want to tell anybody 'bout it yet, Mother."

"Has Sister something on her mind, too?" asked Daddy Morrison jokingly.

"No, I haven't," answered Sister promptly. "But I want to see what Roddy has on his."

"Well, then, here's your oatmeal," said Mother Morrison gaily. "Only, Brother dear, whatever you do, don't try to catch any more burglars, will you?"

Brother and Sister ate breakfast quickly and were ready to walk with Ralph and Daddy Morrison to the station, which made a very nice beginning for the day. Brother was in such a hurry to reach school he never looked back once when Ralph and Daddy left them at the station, though Sister walked backward and waved till she turned the corner.

"What have you got on your mind?" she asked Brother curiously, when they were out of sight of the station.

CHAPTER XXI

BROTHER FINDS THE DIAMOND

"SOMETHING," said Brother mysteriously. "You'll see when we get to school. You can come in our room, if you want to, and watch me."

The iron gate and the main doors were unlocked, though there were no other pupils in sight when Brother and Sister reached school. Sister was very glad to go with Brother into his room, for she knew there would be no one in the kindergarten so early.

Brother walked straight to the sand-table, and without taking off his hat or coat, began to dig in the sand with his hands.

"What are you doing?" cried Sister. "Look out, you're throwing sand on the floor."

Brother continued to dig in the sand. He tossed it all about and scooped the enchanted forest they had built for the last fairy-tale story Miss Gray had read to the class, right into the

little stone castle which he had built himself with great care.

"Roddy," cried Sister again. "What is the matter with you? Did you lose something?"

Brother looked at her, his cheeks red with excitement.

"No, I didn't," he said eagerly, "but I'll tell you what I think—I think Miss Gray lost the stone of her ring in this sand."

"Like the pin?" asked Sister. "Oh, Roddy, maybe she did! Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could find it?"

She came up to the sand-table and began to dig in the sand, too.

"Hello, Roddy!" the door opened and Mickey Gaffney stamped noisily in. "Hello, Betty! Why, what are you doing?" he added as he saw them tossing the sand about.

Brother and Sister both tried to talk at once.

"It's Miss Gray's diamond!" they cried. "Maybe it's lost in the sand!"

"Naw!" said Mickey stoutly. "She said she had it after recess, and she didn't touch the sand-table after that. What makes you think it's in there?"

"'Cause we found a pin in our sand-box, didn't we, Roddy?" Sister insisted. "Jimmie said somebody had lost it on the beach and it

was scooped up with the sand the man sold Daddy."

"Well, of course, there's no harm looking," admitted Mickey, and he began to help them hunt.

When Miss Gray came in at quarter of nine, she found the three children busily scraping in the sand, with a circle of boys and girls interestedly watching them. There was sand on the floor, sand in their hair, and sand on top of her desk, for Mickey had scratched violently and sent the shining grains in a fine shower over half the room.

"My dear children!" cried the teacher in dismay. "What are you doing? You've ruined the castle! Brother, look at the pretty trees you've broken! How could you be so naughty! And Sister, too—child, your hair is full of sand!"

Miss Gray looked ready to cry, and some of her pupils felt uncomfortable.

"Roddy said he was going to find the diamond out of your ring," said Norman Crane uneasily. "That's what they're looking for."

"My diamond!" repeated Miss Gray. "Why, Brother, what made you thnik I lost it in the sand? I'm sure I didn't—don't you remember I said I had it after recess, and we played with the sand-table long before? Come now, I want

you to put back every bit of this sand before the bell rings."

"We found a pin," muttered Brother. "Jimmie said somebody lost it on the beach. And maybe—I thought perhaps——" He tunneled through a heap of sand in a last desperate effort before Miss Gray should absolutely forbid him to hunt any further.

"Look!" he shouted, so that they heard him in the next room. "I've got it! Look, look, Miss Gray!"

He held up something hard and covered with sand. Something round, with sharp little points on one side.

"Look, look!" he kept crying. "I knew I'd find it!"

Miss Gray was almost as excited as he was. She brushed off the sand and everyone saw clearly that it was the diamond which had dropped out of her ring.

"The setting must have been loose," she explained, "and when I was handling the sand it simply dropped out and has been here ever since. But I was so sure I had it after recess."

The excited boys and girls helped Brother and Mickey to sweep up the sand and Miss Gray said that she could never thank Brother enough. Mr. Alexander, the principal, heard

how he found the stone and stopped him in the hall that noon to tell him that he thought he had done a very clever thing.

"But, you see, I only hunted," explained Brother.

"Well, that's the reason you found the diamond," said Mr. Alexander, smiling. "Miss Gray and even Mickey wouldn't have thought of looking in the sand; everyone was so sure the stone was in the ring till after recess. It never pays to be too positive about anything."

Sister had told the kindergarten how her brother found Miss Gray's missing stone, and, indeed, the news was over the whole school in a short time. Everyone was very glad, for Miss Gray was a popular teacher and she had made little fuss about her loss, although everyone knew she was sorry to have her ring spoiled.

She told Brother she was going to take the diamond down to the jewelers that very night and have it put back in the ring, and in a few days she wore the ring to school and showed him the blue stone and the white stone side by side just as they had always been.

"And you and Mickey have been so good to me and tried to help me find my stone so faithfully," said Miss Gray, for she knew all about the time they had tried to be detectives, "that I

want you both to help me celebrate its recovery. Don't you think it would be nice to go into the city next Saturday and go to the Zoo, and have lunch downtown? And we might invite your sister and Mickey's for company. Shall we?"

Brother and Mickey thought this was a beautiful plan and Mother Morrison and Mrs. Gaffney thought so, too. Sister and Nina Gaffney were also delighted at the idea of going to the Zoo, so five very happy people set off the following Saturday, for Mother Morrison thought Brother and Sister might skip dancing-school on such a special occasion.

They had the best time at the Zoo, and saw so many strange and curious creatures that Sister talked about them for a week afterward. And they had lunch in a wonderful restaurant with two kinds of ice-cream for dessert and a plate of fancy cakes for each child. Miss Gray knew how to give a real party, there was no doubt of that.

CHAPTER XXII

FOR THANKSGIVING TIME

"MOTHER," said Brother, coming home from school the Monday after the Saturday party to the Zoo, "Mother, I have a piece to speak with gestures."

"That's very nice, I'm sure," answered Mother Morrison. "Is it a long piece, dear? What is it about?"

"Thanksgiving," said Brother importantly. "Did you speak pieces when you went to school, Mother?"

"Dear me, yes," replied his mother. "Not only at Thanksgiving and Christmas, but every Friday afternoon."

"With gestures?" asked Brother.

"Oh, of course, with gestures," nodded Mother Morrison. "May I see your piece, dear?"

Brother handed her the typewritten slip. It wasn't a very long piece, for he was a little boy and Miss Gray did not believe children should

be made to learn great, long speeches until they were old enough to understand them.

"Why, this is very pretty," said Mother Morrison when she had read the four verses. "Keep still a minute, Sister, and listen to the first verse; this is what Brother is going to recite at the Thanksgiving exercises."

Sister, who had been jumping about the room while they talked, came up to Mother Morrison and climbed into her lap to listen.

"Is it poetry?" she asked curiously.

"Yes, dear," said Mother Morrison. "It's about a turkey. Listen:

"'The turkey flapped his wings and cried
"I'm looked upon with awe and pride,
And everywhere you hear folks say
I crown the feast Thanksgiving Day."'"

"There's three more verses," said Brother to Sister. "And where the turkey flaps his wings I make my arms go—like this," and he flapped his arms up and down to show her.

"We'll all have to come and hear you," promised Mother Morrison. "Sister has a part in the program, too, dear."

"Not poetry," explained Sister modestly. "But I'm in three things. We have to learn a

new song to sing, and I'm a fairy in a play and a little Puritan girl in a picture the eighth grade is going to have."

"What kind of a picture?" asked Brother.

"A table low, Beatrice Giles said," answered Sister, but Mother Morrison laughed merrily.

"Beatrice meant a tableau, chicks," she said. "That is a picture where no one moves. You have to keep perfectly still from the moment the curtain rises until it drops again. Do you think you can do that, Sister?"

"Oh, yes," Sister said confidently. "It's nothing to keep still without moving."

"We have to bring things for poor people to eat, too," announced Brother, remembering what the principal had said about "thank offerings." "What shall we take, Mother?"

"Where are the poor people?" Sister asked. "Mickey was poor last year, 'cause he didn't have any shoes, but this year he has tan ones and he says his father works steady every day."

"Say 'steadily,' not 'steady,'" corrected Mother Morrison. "No, Mickey isn't 'poor people' this year, dearies, and we're glad for him that he isn't. Poor people are those who for one reason or another can not help themselves. We'll ask Daddy to-night about what you can take to school; Louise and Grace and Jimmie

will want to take something, too. The high school has a thank-offering every year also."

"Mickey's going to take the poor people potatoes," said Brother, walking home from school with Sister one noon. "He says poor people always like potatoes."

"Well, I tell you what I think we ought to do," declared Sister. "I think we ought to go see the poor people and ask them what they would like. Norman Crane's going to bring potatoes, too. And Daddy said last night we could have all we wanted from the bin down cellar. Now maybe the poor people will get tired of potatoes. Let's ask 'em."

"You don't know them," said Brother doubtfully. "How can you ask them?"

"Why, just ask them," retorted Sister. "We know where they live—down over the railroad. Instead of playing out some night after school, we can go and see them. And if they don't all like potatoes we can take apples or turnips or oranges to school."

Brother wasn't at all eager to follow this plan and he rather hoped Sister would forget it. The children were to bring their thank-offerings to the basement of the school the day before Thanksgiving, when the Ridgeway public schools closed for the Thanksgiving recess. The

exercises would be held in the afternoon and after that there would be no more school till the next Monday.

"What are you and Brother always whispering about?" Ralph asked Sister one day when she and Brother had been arguing in a corner for some time.

"Nothing," she answered. "That is," she added, "nothing much."

But, as a matter of fact, she had been insisting that they go and ask the poor people what they wanted for Thanksgiving. The day set for bringing their offerings to school was less than a week off.

If you are curious to learn whether they really did go and ask the people who lived over the railroad, or whether Brother persuaded Sister that potatoes were all right to take, you will have to read the next book of this series, to be called "BROTHER AND SISTER'S HOLIDAYS." That story will tell you, too, whether Brother remembered his gestures when he recited his piece, and all about the kind of fairy Sister made and how she managed her wings.

THE END

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And then prepared to stay.

A handy spoon was lying there,
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What invitation such as that
Could ever be refused?
Perhaps we'd better go and leave
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To penetrate more deeply in
That little Jell-O matter.

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